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THE SONGSTRESSES OF SCOTLAND

By SARAH TYTLER and J. L. WATSON

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TWO VOLS.—I.

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TO THE

AUTHOR OF "RAB AND HIS FRIENDS"

WHO HAS SHOWN TO THE PRESENT GENERATION

WHAT SCOTCH WIT AND PATHOS CAN BE

THIS BOOK

IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

BY TWO OF HIS FRIENDS AND COUNTRYWOMEN

PREFACE.

THE object of the authors of this book has been to bring together into one group some gifted women whose songs are known wherever the Scotch foot treads or the Scotch language lingers. It was the part of famous Frenchwomen to reign in French *salons;* it has remained for this unique group of Scotchwomen to reign alike "in the kitchen and the ha'," in the cottage as well as the castle.

The records of these song-writers already published do not bring them together and show them as representing a delightful branch of art. They are deficient likewise in other important particulars. The present writers therefore thought that an attempt to supply such deficiencies before it was too late would be acceptable to the general public. They have

endeavoured to represent these singers amid their local surroundings, and the contemporaries with whom they were on terms of intimacy, so that side-lights might thus be cast both on the singers and their songs.

In one instance the authors have been fortunate in finding quite fresh material. Through the kind liberality of Miss Douglas, Cumin Place, Grange, Edinburgh, and of other friends, they have had access to a large portion of Alison Cockburn's fine old letters, on which Sir Walter Scott set great store. These letters afford a wonderfully perfect picture of the woman, and at the same time give quaint glimpses into the social life of the Edinburgh of the past.

GLOSSARY.

A-be, let a-be, let alone.
Ae, one.
Agee, awry, to one side; wrong.
Ain, own.
Ait-cake, oat-cake.
Arle, to confirm a bargain with a piece of money.
Auld, old.
Auld Reekie, Edinburgh.
Aumry, a cupboard.
Ayont, beyond.

Ba', a ball.
Bab, a nosegay.
Baillie, an alderman.
Bairn, a child.
Bandster, one who binds sheaves.
Banning, cursing.
Bannock, a cake made with water only, and baked on a girdle.
Bardy, to argue petulantly.
Bauk, the cross-beam which supports the rafters.
Bauld, bold.
Bauldy, Archibald.
Beck, to curtsey.
Beck, a waterfall.
Ben, to bring ben, to carry within.
Bicker, a wooden bowl.
Bield, shelter.
Bien, comfortable.
Biggit, built.
Bigonet, a linen cap or coif.
Bink, a bench or seat.
Blate, bashful.
Blink, a gleam; a glance.
Blithe, cheerful.
Blybs, an eruption on the skin.
Bobbing, dancing.
Bodle, a coin equal to the third part of a halfpenny.
Boggie, a spirit that frequents marshy places.
Bogle, a hobgoblin.
Bon-grace, a straw hat.
Bonnie, beautiful, pretty.
Bowsing, drinking.
Bracken, the fern.
Brae, a declivity.
Brag, the boast.
Braid, broad.
Braw, fine.
Braws, fine clothes.
Bridie, the little bride.
Broose, a race at country weddings.
Brose, a kind of pottage made by pouring boiling water on oatmeal.
Browny, a sprite or fairy who made himself useful as a household drudge.
Browst, as much malt liquor as is brewed at a time.
Buchts, sheep-pens.
Bucken, buckhorn.
Buiket (booked), having a purpose of marriage registered.
Burnie, a small rivulet.
Buskit, attired.
Byganes, bygones.
Byre, a cow-house.

Caddie, a messenger.
Cadgie, cheerful, sportive.

Cairly, *see* Carle.
Cairn, a heap of stones; a rocky mountain.
Callant, a stripling.
Caller, fresh.
Cannily, cautiously, gently.
Canny, cautious, prudent.
Cantrips, foolish tricks.
Canty, small, neat.
Carle, an old man.
Carline, an old woman.
Caterans, Highland robbers.
Chap, to knock.
Chapman, a pedlar.
Chaumer, a chamber.
Chiel, *chield*, a young man.
Chuckies, chickens.
Clachan, a village with a church in it.
Clack, gossip.
Clack, sound of a mill-wheel.
Claver, to talk idly.
Claymore, a large sword for both hands.
Cleathing, clothing.
Cleckit, hatched.
Cleugh, a hollow between precipitous banks.
Clocksy, lively.
Cockup, a hat turned up in front.
Coft, bought.
Cog, a circular wooden vessel.
Colley, a shepherd's dog.
Coof, a silly, feeble fellow.
Corn-bing, a corn-heap.
Cosy, comfortable.
Coupet, overset.
Cowed, put down, frightened.
Cowl, a nightcap.
Cowt, a colt.
Crack, to converse familiarly.
Craft (croft), a small farm.
Craigs, rocks.
Crappit-heads, haddock-heads stuffed with oatmeal, onions, suet, &c.
Creel, a fish-basket.
Creelwife, a fishwife.
Crookit, crooked.
Croon, to emit a murmuring sound.
Crouse, bold, confident.
Crunkle, to crease.
Crusie, a small iron lamp.
Cummer, a female friend or gossip.

Daddy, father.
Daffing, gaiety, pastime.
Daft, foolish.
Daidly, a pinafore.
Darg, a day's work.
Daunder, to saunter.
Daur, dare.
Daurna, dare not.
Dawin', dawn.
Dawty, darling.
Deil-hair't (devil a hair of it), nothing.
Dement, to put mad.
Din, noise.
Dirgie, a funeral.
Disna, does not.
Doddy, without horns.
Doited, stupid.
Dominie, a teacher.
Dool, *dule*, sorrow, woe, alas!
Dorty, pettish, saucy.
Douce, sedate.
Dow, do, seeks to do.
Dowfness, melancholy.
Dowie, dull, spiritless.
Dozened, benumbed.
Draff, brewery grains.
Dree, to endure.
Dribbles, drops.
Drumly, muddy.
Duihnewassel, the member of a Highland clan next in rank to the chief.
Dumfoundered, stupefied.
Dung, knocked over.
Dwam, a swoon.

Eerie, dreary, causing fear.
Eident, industrious.
Elderlin, elderly.
Elritch, frightful.

Fain, eager, glad.
Farin', fare.
Fash, trouble.

Fashious, troublesome.
Fauld, a fold.
Fause, false.
Fecht, fight.
Fee, to hire.
Fend, to provide for.
Fendin', faring.
Ferlie, a wonder.
Fidge, to be restless or fidgety.
Fleech, to flatter.
Fling, to dance.
Flit, to remove from one house to another.
Flyte, to scold.
Force, a waterfall.
Forgather, to meet with, to court as sweethearts.
Fou (full), drunk.
Fule, a fool.
Furm, a form or bench.

Gab, to talk.
Gabbert, a boat.
Gait, way.
Gang, go.
Gangrel, a stroller.
Gar, to compel.
Gauciness, stateliness of person.
Gear, money, goods, clothing.
Gee, to change.
Genty, neat, genteel.
Ghaist, a ghost.
Gie, to give.
Giff-gaff, mutual giving.
Gill, a ravine.
Gilly, a giddy young woman.
Gin, if.
Glaikit, giddy.
Glaumerie, ocular deception caused supernaturally.
Glee, to squint.
Glen, a valley.
Glent, *glint*, to glance.
Gloaming, the evening twilight.
Gloom, to look sullen.
Glower, to stare.
Gowan, the mountain daisy.
Gowd, gold.
Gowk, a fool.
Gowl, to weep noisily.
Graith, directness.
Grane, to groan.
Grannie, grandmother.
Grat, wept.
Gree, the pre-eminence.
Greet, to weep.
Gridle (girdle), a circular iron plate for toasting cakes on the fire.
Grip, to grasp.
Grit (great), ready to cry.
Grue, to shudder.

Haggis-bag, a sheep's maw.
Hairst, harvest.
Hale, whole.
Halesome, healthsome.
Halfling, a stripling.
Halflings, half-way.
Hallan, an inner wall in cottages to protect the room from the cold air of the door.
Harry, to pillage.
Haud, to hold.
Haudin' (holding), a farm.
Haver, to talk foolishly.
Haverel, a stupid person.
Havins, manners.
Heartsome, merry.
Hecht, gave.
Hempie, a tricky youth.
Het, hot.
His lane, alone.
Hooly and fairly, cautiously.
Hope, a hollow.
Hout! hoot! (fye), expressive of dissatisfaction.

Ilk, the same (*of that ilk*, *i.e.*, of the same).
Ilka, *ilk*, every.
Ill-faured, ill-favoured.
Infare, a feast given the day after a wedding.
Ingle, fire.
Ingle-neuk, the corner of the fireside.

Jaud, a young woman.
Jo, a sweetheart.

Kailyard, a kitchen-vegetable garden.

Kale, kail, colewort; broth made from the same.
Kebbuck, a cheese.
Ken, to know.
Kentna, knew not.
Kimmer, see Cummer.
Kirn, a churn.
Kirn, a harvest-home.
Knowe, a little hill.
Kye, cows.

Lad-bairn, a male child.
Lag, slow, tardy.
Laigh, low.
Laird, a proprietor of land.
Landward, rustic, boorish.
Langsyne, long ago.
Lass-bairn, a female child.
Lave, to wash.
Lave, the remainder.
Laverock, the lark.
Lawerly, lawyerlike.
Lea, pasture-land.
Leal, loyal.
Lear, lere, lair, lare, learning.
Leddy, a lady.
Lee, to lie.
Leglin, a milk-pail.
Letna, let not.
Lick, to beat.
Lift, to carry off by theft.
Lilt, to sing.
Lin, a waterfall.
Ling, rushy grass.
Link, to walk smartly or trippingly.
Linkum-twine, packthread.
Lish, active.
Loaning, a road between fields.
Loof, the palm of the hand.
Loon, a boy.
Loudons, the Lothians.
Loundert, stunned.
Loup, to leap.
Low, a blaze.
Lucken-gowan, the globe-flower.
Lug, the ear.
Lunzie folk, vagrant people.
Lyart, grey-haired.
Lyke-wake, the watching of a dead body.

Mair, mairly, more.
Maist, most.
Mane, to moan.
Manse, a parsonage-house.
Mark, merk, a Scotch silver coin, about thirteenpence-halfpenny sterling.
Maun, must.
Mawkin, a hare.
May, a young maiden.
Mear, a mare.
Merry-meet, a feast on the occasion of the birth of a child.
Merse, The, Berwickshire.
Mess (or *Mass*) *John,* the parish priest.
Mill-e'e, the opening in the cases of a mill where the meal is let out.
Mischanter, a misfortune.
Mittens, worsted gloves.
Mools, the earth of the grave.
Moss-trooper, a robber.
Mou, the mouth.
Muckle, much, big.
Mutch, a woman's head-dress.
Mysie, Marjory.

Neep, turnip.
Nettle-kail, soup made with nettles.
Neuk (nook), corner.
Nieve, the fist.
Noddle, the head.
Nouse (νοῦς), sense, understanding.

O'erlay (overlay), a cravat.
Out, to gae out, to rise in rebellion.
Ower, over.

Pack, to go away.
Pad, to travel on foot.
Paidle, to wade in water.
Pat, a pot.
Pawkiness, slyness.
Pearlins, laces.
Pensy, conceited.
Pibroch, the music of the bagpipes.

Pickle, a small quantity.
Plack, a coin equal to about one-third of a penny.
Plaiden, coarse twilled woollen cloth.
Play-banning, play-denouncing.
Plenishing, furnishings.
Plowter, to flounder through water or mud.
Pock, a bag.
Portioner, the possessor of part of a property which has been originally divided among co-heirs.
Pouch, a purse.
Pouther, powder.
Pow, the head.
Pund, a pound.

Quo' (quoth), said.

Randy, ran'y, a rough, scolding woman.
Rantin', cheerful, gleesome.
Rap, to knock.
Rax, to reach.
Red, to put in order.
Reekin', smoking.
Reeling, dancing reels.
Reiving, plundering.
Rising, a rebellion.
Roose, to extol.
Routh, plenty.
Rowan-tree, the mountain-ash.
Rowing, rolling.
Rug and rive, to carry off by violence.
Rummelgumption, common-sense.
Rung, a heavy staff, a cudgel.
Runkled, wrinkled.

Sair, sore.
Sark, shirt.
Saut, salt.
Scauld, to scold.
Scone, a cake.
Scour, to run about.
Settle, a seat.
Shaws, birchen woods.
Shear, to cut corn.
Shirra, the sheriff.
Shouther, the shoulder.
Sib, related by blood.
Sic, siccan, such.
Siller, silver.
Singet heads, singed sheep's heads.
Sinsyne, since.
Skeich, skittish.
Skirl, to shout shrilly.
Slee, sly.
Smooth-gabbit, smooth-spoken.
Snood, a fillet for binding the hair.
Sonsy, well-conditioned.
Sough, a rushing sound.
Spaewife, a fortune-teller.
Speer, spier, to ask.
Spence, the interior apartment of a country-house.
Spring, a quick dance tune.
Spunk, spark.
Spunkie, an ignis fatuus.
Stark, strong.
Steeks, shuts.
Stickit, was unable to proceed with.
Stirk, a young ox or heifer.
Stour, stern.
Stown, stolen.
Straik, to stretch.
Straikit, stroked.
Strath, a valley through which a river flows.
Strippit, striped.
Swankie, a clever young fellow.
Swatch, a pattern, an imitation.
Swerf, to swoon.
Syne, then.

Tap, top.
Tautit, rough and shaggy.
Tent, to take care of.
Tether, a rope with which cattle are tied at pasture.
Thrang (throng), busy.
Thraw, twist.
Thrawn-gabbit (*lit.*, having a distorted mouth), ill-tempered.
Thrawnness, obstinacy.
Thritty, thirty.

Thrums, loose threads.
Tibbie, Isabella.
Tirling at the pin, twirling the latch of the door.
Tittie, sister.
Tocher, dowry.
Tod, the fox (sometimes *Tod Lowrie*).
Toom, empty.
Toots! (Tut!), denoting impatience or contempt.
Trews, trousers.
Trow, believe.
Tryst, an appointment to meet.
Trysted, engaged.
Tyke, a dog.

Unchancy, unlucky.
Unco, very; odd, strange.
Unkent, unknown.
Unred, out of order.
Unsonsy, unlucky.

Vaunty, boastful.

Wabster, a weaver.
Wab-wabstering, treading like a weaver.
Wae (woe), sorrow.
Wale, to choose.
Wan, to win.
Wanton, merry.
Wapinschaw, a periodical exhibition of weapons.
Warlock, a wizard.
Waur, worse.
Wean (wee ane), a child.
Wede, weeded.
Weel-kenned, well-known.
Whilk, which.
Whins, furze.
Winsome (winning), engaging.
Woven willows, willow baskets.
Wow! denoting surprise, gladness, &c.
Writer, an attorney.

Yaud, an old mare.
Yett, a gate.
Yoke, to engage with.
Yowe, a ewe.

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LADY GRISELL BAILLIE.

1665—1746.

THE bravest of all Scotch heroines is Lady Grisell Baillie; and the simplest and sweetest of stories is her memoir, written by her elder daughter, Lady Murray of Stanhope, the friend of Molly Lepel, Lady Hervey.

Lady Grisell was born on Christmas Day, 1665, at Redbraes Castle, in the Merse, which is famous in old Scotch tradition for the beauty of its women and the gallantry of its men. As a rule, the Merse shares with the "fat Lothians" a certain tameness of landscape, but there are exceptions on both sides—the long grey ridges of the Lammermoors, and the broken crests of the Cheviots. Grisell was the eldest of the eighteen children of Sir Patrick Home, afterwards Earl of Marchmont. She had an ailing

mother, and a father absorbed in the heat of desperate political troubles.

The cares of life came betimes to the sensible, active girl, who, like a little old woman, in her tippet and mob-cap, ran about in the drugget-hung rooms and among the wand chairs, the aumries, and the spinning-wheels. She learned the trick of serving her kindred so early and so well, that she could not give it up when she was a fine old lady. Till her eighty-first year, she rose the earliest of her family, and managed the most difficult of their affairs.

When barely beyond childhood she was chosen to go on an innocent political message to an unfortunate gentleman lying in prison. Most likely she rode behind a trusty servant on one of her father's horses. She must have entered Edinburgh by one of its bristling ports, and "grued" at the skulls whitening on its pikes, before she passed the many steep gables and outside stairs, the yawning close mouths and towering houses, and stared with round eyes of wonder at the Nor' Loch and the Castle, at the grand mansions with their bonnie gardens, and

the throng of passengers between the Canongate and the High Street.

The gentleman whom Grisell went to visit was Mr. George Baillie of Jerviswoode, in whom she was fated to have a nearer interest than that arising from her father's complicity in his offence. Her mission was executed with such discretion that she was called upon to undertake another before Mr. Baillie suffered for treason. In the course of these resorts to the grim quarters of the Tolbooth, she met and became acquainted with young George Baillie. At the time of his father's execution he was only a lad of nineteen, and she a lass of eighteen. Every night at this period she walked alone over a dark country road and through an eerie kirk-yard to carry food to her father, who was in hiding in the family vault at Polwarth. Sir Patrick lay on his mattress among the mouldering bones of his fathers, with his good Kilmarnock cowl drawn well over his brow defying the cold, as he whiled away the time profitably in repeating George Buchanan's Latin psalms. Along with household news and irrepressible quavers of girlish laughter, his

young daughter brought him his rations; and among them, on one occasion, was the famous sheep's head, the disappearance of which from the family dinner-table had nearly betrayed them both to the troopers who were in possession at Redbraes.

Even after Sir Patrick's escape beyond the seas, and after the most of his family had joined him, Grisell had a heavy end of the string to bear. She undertook and accomplished, all by herself, two voyages from Holland to Scotland and back again, in order to bring over her sister Julian to join the rest of the family. When the girls had made the passage and landed at Brill, they set out, the same night, to walk to Rotterdam, under the escort of a gentleman. To be sure, the feat proved too much for one of the girls, and, to be sure also, Julian lost her shoes in the mud, and Grisell had to take her on her back and carry her the rest of the way, the gentleman being loaded with the luggage.

Grisell's family settled at Utrecht, where they lived till the Revolution—an interval of three years and a half. To these three years and a

half of exile, poverty, and toil, Grisell was wont to refer as having been the happiest years of her life. Work was nothing to her at that time, when life and love were young. She did the greater part of the household work for the large struggling family. Grisell seemed to have taken kindly to the land of canals, mighty poplars, and iris-painted houses, with whose natives, in their thrift, industry, love of learning, and zeal for religious freedom, the Scotch have so many points of union, besides those confirmed by the Synod of Dort.

The tightly-pinched household of Dr. Wallace, as Sir Patrick called himself, was the hospitable point of union for poor Scotch ladies and gentlemen, far and near. So little was this Presbyterian household disfigured by the asceticism which was an ugly excrescence of later Presbyterianism, as of later Puritanism, that the head of the house, in writing home before Lady Home and the family joined him, expressly desires, with a father's heart for his children, that "care may be taken to keep them hearty and merry, laughing, dancing, and singing." If he were among

them he would help their mirth by a tune on the flute, which he was learning. And again, he urges that "they ought not with right to pass a week-day without dancing; for lost estates can be recovered again, but health once lost by a habit of melancholy can never be recovered." These Homes and their guests drank small beer instead of Bourdeaux, ate porridge and milk in place of curious pasties, and wore threadbare plaidens and faded linen for brocade and velvet. They had no money to spend on such Dutch porcelain mugs, cups, and pots with flower roots in them, as other banished English and Scotch ladies improved their banishment by collecting. The Home's whole company, on one occasion, could only furnish a single coin to street beggars; but this was little matter to the family whom the burly clothworkers and the lean scholars of Utrecht alike respected and loved.

Sir Patrick taught Dutch, English, &c., to his young people, and to Grisell among the rest, when she could spare time for a lesson. Her younger sister Christina was the great singer of the family; but Grisell, in the midst of her

multifarious engagements, left a MS. volume of written and half-written songs of which she was the author.

In addition to other members of the household and to visitors, there were two likely young men going and coming to lighten the work to the girls—Grisell's favourite brother, Patrick, and his comrade, George Baillie of Jerviswoode. The young men rode in the Prince of Orange's Guards, stood sentry at his gate, had the treat of seeing him eat his dinner in public, and, when they were in mind for a frolic, set their halberts across the door and would not let a pretty girl pass till she gave them a kiss. Grisell had their honour so much at heart that she would sit up of nights, losing the sleep of which she had much need,—and it is written of her that she was always a good sleeper,—that she might wash, starch, and darn her brother's lace cravat and ruffles. Doubtless she did not withhold the same kind, womanly office from her brother's gallant friend, who was living from hand to mouth on what was left of the rents of his confiscated estates, and on money lent to him by

his compassionate Dutch hosts. When Grisell went a-marketing, or to the mill for the family allowance of flour, George Baillie was trusted to attend her if her brothers chanced to be out of the way. The love between them was an understood thing; only he did not have two pennies to rub upon each other. As for her, she had no means of proving how truly she returned his tender affection, except by steadily refusing the flattering offers of marriage which her anxious father and mother were tempted to press upon her, and by vowing, in her youthful enthusiasm, to live and die a maid for his sake.

At that time, according to her daughter's description, Grisell Home, under her high crowned hat and hood, was a very handsome girl, with a light, lithe figure, delicate features, chesnut hair, and a complexion that rivalled the most dazzling red and white of the Dutch women.

There is another account of Grisell, given by an old servant, who remembered her as "a little woman marked by small-pox;" but

whether young or old, blooming or withered, she was one and the same unapproachable Grisell.

At last the Prince of Orange was called to England, and the redemption of his friends drew near. But the epoch of consolation and triumph so long looked forward to, was heavily dashed with disappointment and sorrow to the Homes. The fleet in which the prince and his friends had embarked was reported to have been lost in the storm that had arisen. The family, in the greatest distress, travelled to Helvoetsluys to get reliable tidings. They found a throng before them on the same errand, but though they soon received word of their friends' safety, the news was "no more to Grisell than an occurrence in which she had not the least concern," for that very day her sister Christina died of sore-throat, through the exposure and overcrowding in the small seaport. Grisell's indefatigable spirit was always terribly baffled by death.

After declining to be made one of the maids of honour to Queen Mary, Grisell Home was married to George Baillie at Redbraes Castle, on the 17th September, 1692 — four years sub-

sequent to the revolution which restored to him his estate—when he was in his twenty-ninth and she in her twenty-eighth year. The union, for which there had been so good a preparation, lasted for forty-eight years—years of love and trust. In that long period (according to Grisell's own declaration) there never was the shadow of a quarrel between husband and wife. Grisell's daughter by a single touch preserves the wife's faithful worship and fondness. "He never went abroad but she went to the window to look after him (so she did that very day he fell ill — the last time he was abroad), never taking her eyes from him so long as he was in sight." There are other little touches almost equal to this, telling of the husband and father's devotion. He never came back from London, where he sat in Parliament, without bringing to each of his family something which he thought they would like. "He would have his trunk opened to give us them before he took time to rest himself." When he took his wife and daughters to London with him, and the girls were of an age to relish diversions—"such as balls, masquerades, parties

by water, and music"—the father and the mother were always in the parties, and the busy much-occupied statesman was the merriest of all.

It would seem as if Grisell's great activity and management, with her little trick of spending herself in order to spare others, proved occasionally a trial to her family. Lady Murray recounts one instance of it with the most *naïf* humour. Lady Grisell, when on a visit to her aged father, had undertaken to examine his steward's accounts—a duty for which she was qualified by her husband's having entrusted to her the laying out of his income. She did this work at Kimmerghame for two months, toiling from five in the morning till twelve at night. "She half killed the whole family by attending her, though they kept not the hours that she did." Yet the wife and mother was so modest and so generous in her excess of virtue that her family might well excuse such excess in her.

One must sympathise with the narrative of Grisell and her husband going abroad, in middle life, with their family, to seek health for

their second son-in-law, Lord Binning. Grisell's pleasure in showing her children every corner of Utrecht is very characteristic. It touches one still to read that when—for fear of her dirtying it—she was denied admittance to the house where Sir Patrick Home and his ten children had found quarters, and where young George Baillie had come a-courting, she offered to put off her shoes if she would only be allowed to cross once again the familiar threshold. This was denied her, and she went away in great disappointment.

Perhaps the strongest tribute of affection that is offered to Grisell is that paid to her by her dying son-in-law. Missing her from his sick-bed,—when she was sick herself,—he vehemently protested, "If anything ails mamma I'll put my head under the clothes, and never look up again." In her agony of grief at his death, Grisell protested "that she could have begged her bread with pleasure to save his life."

But the end here below of all this true love came at last. George Baillie died on the 6th August, 1738, at Oxford, where he was residing

for the education of Lord Binning's sons. For a long time after Lady Grisell had returned to the Merse, she could do nothing save read his letters, shed floods of tears, and cry how could she live after such a man!

Eight years later, just at the close of the national distress which accompanied the year of the Rebellion, Grisell Baillie, lying ill in London, gave directions that her body should be conveyed to Mellerstain, and laid beside that of her husband in the family vault. But if the carrying out of this wish should be too much trouble, she left her children to do as they pleased. There was a black purse in her cabinet with money which she had kept for that last service, so that the family might not then be straitened.

She had taken much to heart some difference which had arisen between her and her nephews, and spoke strongly of their undutiful and unkind behaviour towards her. But when her daughter censured them, the old woman recalled her censure, and urged that they were the sons of her dear brother, Patrick.

She requested the last chapter of Proverbs to be read, with a view to her grandsons' choice of wives. Then she said that she could die in peace, that all she desired was to be with George Baillie—and so she died.

Of Grisell Baillie's well-known song, "Werena my heart licht I wad dee," Allan Cunningham says, that it is "very original, very characteristic, and very irregular." In its noble homeliness, it is in some respects a reflection of Grisell's life; a specimen of those quickly-scribbled, half-finished songs, to which Lady Murray refers—the song of an idle moment. It is written to give vent to the writer's feelings, and to create a little lively amusement in the family circle. It bears no mark of having been rewritten. Its phrases certainly show no sign of having been fastidiously culled. Comparing it with Lady Grisell's history, it seems to have slight personal references which might give it additional value in the eyes of its author and her friends.

The first verse has something of the old ballad quaintness :—

"There was ance a may and she loo'd na men:
She biggit her bonnie bower down i' yon glen;
But now she cries Dool! and Well-a-day!
Come down the green gate, and come here away."

Was the "may who loo'd na men" Grisell herself, as she walked "in maiden meditation fancy free," when her devotion to her family and the labour which it involved prevented her from precociously anticipating her fate, and hankering lackadaisically after love and love's bane?

The further incidents told in the song have, indeed, little correspondence with the facts of Grisell's life, unless indeed that she may have learned, in those years of waiting at Utrecht, to have a special sympathy with that form of love's malady which is "the sickness of hope deferred."

Throughout the song, in spite of its hasty carelessness, there are abundant sparkles of picturesqueness and humour. Very expressive is the statement—

"His wee wilfu' tittie she loo'd na me."

And its boldness is increased by the explanatory note:—

"(I was taller and twice as bonnie as she)."

Scornfully sad is the record of the mother's feigned illness, which was successful in extorting a hostile pledge from the weak, impetuous son :—

"The day it was set for the bridal to be,
The wife took a dwam and lay down to dee;
She mained and she graned wi' fause dolour and pain,
Till he vow'd he never wad see me again."

Matter of fact in the extreme, but not without genius in its realism, is the reflection—

"His kindred socht ane o' higher degree,
Said, Would he wed ane was landless like me?
Although I was bonnie, I wasna for Johnnie."

Could such a hero's name have been other than Johnnie?

Comical indeed is the summing-up of the poor heroine's disqualifications as quoted by herself:—

"They said I had neither coo nor cawf,
Nor *dribbles* o' drink coming through the draff,
Nor *pickles* o' meal rinnin' frae the mill-e'e."

The breaking-up of the main thread of the song, that the singer may detail a cruel wrong done her by the spiteful sister, in league with her mortal enemy, the mother, is exceedingly natural:—

"His tittie she was baith wylie and slee,
She spiedme as I cam ower the lea;
And then she ran in, and made a loud din;
Believe your ain een an ye trow na me."

What! to grudge the lass that one meeting and parting on the lea!—to suspect that she would abuse it to seduce the faltering lover from his duty, and so deny her the "ae kiss" granted even to the hapless wife of auld Robin Gray!

The two verses which describe the despair of the bated bridegroom do not fail in truth and pathos. Even the changed set of the bonnet is remarked upon with womanly fineness of observation:—

"His bonnet stood aye fu' round on his brow;
His auld ane look'd better than mony ane's new;
But now he lets 't wear ony gait it will hing,
And casts himsel' dowie upon the corn-bing."

Above all, in the two lines of the next verse, this fineness of observation displays itself:—

"And now he gaes daundrin' about the dykes"—

This is a deliberately uninteresting limning of an uninteresting locality sought only for its seclusion.

"And a' he dow do is to hound the tykes"—

is a fitting occupation for a soured and exasperated man, and with a spice of vindictiveness in it.

The last verse has a good deal of the antique ring of the first, and there is some charm in it too, which corresponds with the refrain :—

> "Oh! were we young now as we ance hae been,
> We should hae been gallopin' down on yon grêen,
> And linkin' it ower the lily-white lea;
> *And werena my heart licht I wad dee.*"

The song owes its vitality to this recurring burden. Its sudden inspiration has fused and cast into one perfect line the protest of thousands of stricken hearts in every generation. There is a subdued note of deep passion in the half-defiant repetition of the poor heart's failing refuge: it is the complement of that heroism which broke through and lit up with its glory each crisis of Grisell Baillie's life of usefulness and trial.

WERENA MY HEART LICHT.

THERE was ance a may and she loo'd na men :
She biggit her bonnie bower down i' yon glen ;

But now she cries Dool! and Well-a-day!
Come down the green gate, and come here away.
But now she cries, &c.

When bonnie young Johnnie cam' ower the sea,
He said he saw naething sae lovely as me;
He hecht me baith rings and monie braw things,
And werena my heart licht I wad dee.
He hecht me, &c.

His wee wilfu' tittie she loo'd na me,
(I was taller and twice as bonnie as she;)
She raised sic a pother 'twixt him and his mother,
That werena my heart licht I wad dee.
She raised, &c.

The day it was set for the bridal to be,
The wife took a dwam and lay down to dee;
She mained and she graned wi' fause dolour and pain,
Till he vow'd he never wad see me again.
She mained, &c.

His kindred socht ane o' higher degree,
Said, Would he wed ane was landless like me?
Although I was bonnie, I wasna for Johnnie,
And werena my heart licht I wad dee.
Although I was bonnie, &c.

They said I had neither coo nor cawf,
Nor dribbles o' drink coming through the draff,

Nor pickles o' meal rinnin' frae the mill-e'e;
And werena my heart licht I wad dee.'
Nor pickles, &c.

His tittie she was baith wylie and slee,
She spied me as I cam ower the lea;
And then she ran in, and made a loud din;
Believe your ain een an ye trow na me.
And then she ran in, &c.

His bonnet stood aye fu' round on his brow;
His auld ane look'd better than mony ane's new;
But now he lets 't wear ony gait it will hing,
And casts himsel' dowie upon the corn-bing.
But now he, &c.

And now he gaes daundrin' about the dykes,
And a' he dow do is to hound the tykes:
The live-lang nicht he ne'er steeks his e'e;
And werena my heart licht I wad dee.
The live-lang nicht, &c.

Oh! were we young now as we ance hae been,
We should hae been gallopin' down on yon green,
And linkin' it ower the lily-white lea;
And werena my heart licht I wad dee.
And linkin' it, &c.

JEAN ADAM.

1710—1765.

MORE than a century and a half ago, long before James Watt was born to give new life to the district, Greenock consisted of two little seaports, a quarter of a mile asunder, and with a wide bay between. The inhabitants of the one were mariners and mechanics, and of the other mariners and foreign traders; and the combined population did not number a thousand.

Both seaports had fair harbours for the period, and both enjoyed the privilege of holding yearly markets. These were frequented by the Highlanders, who, descending in companies from the neighbouring mountains—with peaceful intentions for once—disposed of their native stock, and laid in stores of what were by comparison

foreign commodities. But in each of the towns the great centres of activity were the quays, where the gabberts and the fishing-boats lay-to, and now and then a larger vessel lay off. The best houses were built round the quay-heads, in the old fashion which enabled men and women to look down upon the stir produced by their trades, and to combine the indulgence (in a way no longer possible) with air and light, and even with the view of blossoming gardens, waving woods, and green fields. And Greenock and Crawfurdsdyke alike commanded the grand silver sweep of the Frith of Clyde with its lochs, thrown up against the dark mountain land of Cowal—which included Finnart More and Argyle's Bowling-green.

In the house of one of the shipmasters of Crawfurdsdyke, Jean Adam was born about the year 1710. The education which she received in the parish and sewing schools must have been good; and it was very soon put to use. Her father dying when she was young, Jean entered, while yet a girl, the service of a clergyman in the neighbourhood—Mr. Turner of

Greenock, it has been suggested. Here she united in her own person the offices of a modern *bonne*, a nursery governess, and a sewing maid. A minister's income could not afford great remuneration for such assistance. Even highly-trained sempstresses of the time were in the habit of giving their skill and industry, together with the use of their fashionable patterns, for "sixpence a day and their meat." But if young Jean Adam got small payment in crown pieces, and fared on pease brose, nettle kail, and barley-meal scones, she had some compensation in being made so far one of the minister's family, and in being allowed some small share of the priceless treasure of leisure to cultivate her faculties. Not only had she free access to the stray folio of romances and rhymes which is said to have stirred her up to the exercise of her gift, but also to Milton's poems, and to the stately, artificial English versions of the classics on the bookshelves in the minister's study. A taste for reading in such circumstances must have been comparatively rare, and there is evidence that

Jean was greatly encouraged and applauded in its gratification.

Thus in the west country manse young Jean Adam found a home. Busy she must have been,—now knitting the minister's stockings, again helping to make the clothes of his wife and children, boys and girls alike, now taking her turn at one of the many spinning-wheels, which in their combined droning were fit to drive the worthy minister distraught over his sermons, —and again nursing the little ones and attending on the sick. But it was while so engaged that she drew near and curtseyed to the muse. For other experiences of life and livelier diversion than what was afforded by the minister's dusty, heavy volumes, she would have the news of the parish and port. She could tell which lad and lass were forgathering and on the eve of being "cried in the kirk" (*Anglicé*, having the banns published), which boat was amissing, and what bare-footed and shock-headed caterans had crossed at the Cloch ferry for no good. She must also have attended many entertainments both mirthful and solemn—penny wed-

dings and *dirgies*, rockings and tent preachings.

Doubtless, too, on occasion she would go to the fair of Inchcolm—the great Highland fair at Largs—where, besides getting a glimpse of the "horrid heights" of Goatfell and the rocky wilderness of Ailsa Craig, screaming with its wild fowl, she would see more stirks and wethers, and hear more Gaelic, than in any other assembly on this side the Clyde. And if she got a cast in a wherry as far as Glasgow, she would land at the little rustic quay of the Broomielaw, not so big or so busy then as either of those at Crawfurdsdyke or Greenock. Next, she would cross the old bridge, below the arches of which the Highland boats, with their familiar red sails, and their patriarchal freight of cattle, sheep, butter, cheese, eggs, and bright-dyed yarn, passed up the river as far as Rutherglen. Besides the Cross, the College, the High Kirk, the Laigh Kirk, and the new Ramshorn Steeple, she would be certain to visit the imposing metal statue of King William, presented to the city a short while before by Governor Macrae, of

Madras, whose brother was the Ayrshire fiddler in utmost request at kirns. She would get a glimpse of the grand town houses, with their rows of trees and their gardens, and of the high walls and palisades of the mansions of Blythswood and Shawfield, shut off from the streets like the old family hotels of Paris. She would stare awestruck at the Virginian merchants (themselves the noblest, most magnificent men she could ever have beheld), cadets of the county gentry—of the Walkinshaws, Porterfields, Glassfields, and Buchanans. These merchants wore velvet breeches, scarlet cloaks braided with gold or silver, and cocked hats above their wigs. They promenaded, as if with the kind intention of making a public show, before the Exchange, and on that side of the Trongate which at certain hours of the day was respectfully set apart for their private use. Then if Jean had any hankering after the full stream of ruder life, she had liberty to make her way through the narrow lanes and the hurrying throngs of the Saltmarket, the Gallowgate, and the Candleriggs.

No portrait of Jean as she was at this date or at a later time is preserved; nor has any tradition handed down her bodily likeness. Her friends of later generations have to fall back on their fancies, and from analogy puzzle out her physical traits. Was she not a raw-boned, irregular-featured, ruddy lass, somewhat uncouth in air and gait, and at once half bashful and half bouncing in manner? Was not her bearing full of simplicity and straightforwardness, while the fire of enthusiasm dwelt in the large grey eyes under the bushy brows, and a world of warm womanly sympathy and loving kindness spoke in the full soft mouth? As to dress: for a gala trip to Glasgow, and a night or two under the hospitable roof of her own or the Turners' kindred, she was certain to wear a well-preserved Indian cotton gown, and a *bon grace* (straw hat). But when down at the manse of Crawfurdsdyke, she would boast nothing better than a woollen petticoat and a short gown of striped linen within the house; and for a tramp across the moor, blackberry-gathering with the bairns, or a turn on the

quay, she had only to throw over her head the tartan screen or plaid, a fashion which kept its hold in this district long after it had been given up in others. Such was the becoming everyday attire of the Lanarkshire and Ayrshire women.

The great glory of Jean's life, attained whilst she was yet a young woman, was the publication of her volume of poems by subscription. The first piece she is said to have written was nothing more formidable than "An Address to Grief," which, however, was much admired by her friends. She continued to write, her poems getting scattered about. They were collected by a Mr. Drummond of Dymnack, and printed in a little volume by James Duncan, in the Salt-market, Glasgow, in 1734. The curious Address to the Reader, which opens the volume, was not written by Jean, but by one of the Crawfurds, her patrons. It gives a short account of the author, and expressly refers to the literary advantages which she had enjoyed during her service in the manse.

Whether the book was published before or after she had quitted this household, which in

course of time must have had no further need of her, is uncertain. Be this as it may, the list of subscribers shows no lack of friends in her native place. The names of Crawfurds are there by scores, from Dame Margaret of Castlemilk, to the relict of Mr. Thomas Crawfurd, advocate. There are baronets and lairds of that ilk, and their ladies; noble Temples and Montgomerys; ministers of the Gospel and students of divinity in abundance; masters of grammar schools, condescending generously to encourage a sister rival; and merchants and tradesmen down to hammermen and portioners.

If Jean's literary venture did not prove a great success in a mercantile light, it was at least well received by her contemporaries. And one advantage, quite apart from its pecuniary success, it certainly won for her, and that was the distinction, by no means slight in those primitive days, of being in most circles welcomed as a poetess. Yet this distinction was not always held as an honour by the traders of the west. Within the next fifty years the appointment of master of the grammar school of Greenock was

hampered by the stipulation that the master should thenceforth abandon the profane and unprofitable art of poem-making.*

On leaving the manse Jean set up a day-school for teaching girls of her own degree reading, writing, and needlework. According to tradition it was situated among the notable houses of the quay-head. She had for a number of years presided over her samplers, quilting-frames, spelling-books and primers, before the great journey of her life was undertaken. She must have been hard upon middle age when she closed her school for six weeks, and travelled to London and back, in order to obtain an interview with Richardson, the creator of her idol, Clarissa. It has been questioned whether it was within her walking capability to accomplish the long journey at the rate of twenty miles a day, as it was accomplished by Helen Walker, the original of Jeanie Deans, impelled by a much more powerful motive. But, with an occasional "lift" from a coach or a chance traveller, it is quite possible that Jean Adam may have accom-

* It is alleged that this story owes its origin to a mischievous jest.

plished her cherished purpose. She was very much the hare-brained, hardy woman who, for such a cause, would encounter the fatigue and danger that a long journey then involved. The matter, however, remains one of hypothesis; nobody can actually tell, at this date, whether Jean performed her exploit or not. Her scholars believed she performed it. And if she did, it may well be asked where—among the extremes of society which met in the London of Lord Chesterfield and George Whitefield, of Lady Mary Wortley Montague and Lady Huntingdon, of Vauxhall and Moorfields—could there be found a stranger figure than that of the travel-soiled, mazed Scotch schoolmistress? Of all the decorous, sentimental ladies who fluttered round this genius of a dapper little printer, and petted him to his heart's content—what worshipper so unsophisticated, so arch, and so likely to fill him with wondering trepidation as this wild, pure-minded, high-hearted Scotchwoman?

Jean had a little circle at home, in which she was known, loved, and well remembered. This included the kindred spirits among her scholars.

One day she introduced into their studies the startling novelty of reading aloud to them from Shakespeare. The play was *Othello;* and she read it with so much effect, and was so much moved by her own reading, and by Shakespeare's writing, that at last she "swerfed" away in the tumult of her thoughts and feelings. These were the days of fine-lady swooning. And Jean, with her ambition and her imperfect education, was not so circumstanced as to be above affectation, in spite of her natural sincerity. She had a craving for refinement, and refinement was then believed to culminate in that languishingly vague impersonation, "a delicate female." But she was rather out of order in appreciating Shakespeare so heartily. Hers was not the age of hearty enthusiasm for the dramatist, whom it mincingly termed "the Swan of Avon."

Jean indulged her scholars in other intellectual treats. She sang her own songs (would we had more of them to sing!) in her school-room "many a time." And we may be sure that she did not "swerf" away after singing one of them;

on the contrary, we may picture her nodding her head, beating time with her foot, and cracking her fingers, in the most gleeful satisfaction.

But the grim realities of life were fast coming on Jean. It so happens that the loveliest lyric on wedded love is believed to have been written by an unwedded woman—the song of wifely pride and tenderness that comes nearest to Burns' "John Anderson," is held to have been the utterance of the subtle sympathy and latent affection of a woman who never owned a husband. Of all Jean's acquaintances, gentle and simple—merchants, masters of grammar-schools, and ship captains—not one sought, or at least was successful in the suit for, her hand. Yet, with her large-heartedness and quick impulsiveness—though these are towers of strength, if well restrained—Jean Adam was as little capable of standing alone in the world as the silliest and weakest of her sex. Among her many talents practical wisdom did not hold a place. That London journey, and the closing of her door for weeks beyond the brief space usually allotted for holidays, was a dubious step

as regards the prosperity of the school. Scarcely less doubtful was the reading of Shakespeare's play to the children of sternly matter-of-fact and rigidly-righteous folk, descendants of the play-banning Covenanters, in their chief seat, the West. Without question a new and more accommodating schoolmistress would be found, whose fruit and satin pieces, in the easily-dazzled eyes of the sea captains' young daughters, would put out fine linen quilting, and whose strength of mind would not be of such a nature as to lead her to fly in the face of their fathers' and mothers' principles with regard to the vanity of *Othello*.

What told sorest on Jean was an exceedingly rash speculation into which she entered. The single edition of her poems did not all get into the home market. Think of this lone woman —her hair growing grizzled under her *bon grace*—having herself rowed up, wind and tide in her favour, on a Wednesday half-holiday or a Saturday afternoon, to make searching inquiries of Mr. James Duncan in the Saltmarket as to the sale of her book, her anxiety for his

answers balancing any over-weening vanity of which she might ever have been guilty. Time has robbed these incidents of their prosaicness, but left them their poor human interest. Jean was sanguine still, however, and shipped the surplus copies of her poems to Boston in America, from which she never got any return of sale. In addition to the mortification and disappointment which this loss caused her, it swallowed up the little savings she had gathered; and thus she was left destitute when well advanced in years.

In her extremity she had no resource but to seek help from the old friends whom she seems to have more or less offended and alienated by her waywardness and eccentricity. She had now no home or resting-place among her lass-bairns at the quay-head of Crawfurdsdyke. Calm and storm might succeed each other on the watery highway; the golden sun might set and the silver moon rise behind the mountains of Cowal; Dutch and French skippers might take the place of the Highlandmen, and chatter their gibberish in room of the sputtered Gaelic; more and bigger ships, in full sail and with flags

and garlands flying at the masts, might ride in on the rising tide; and happy family groups might sally forth to welcome the returning sailors; but Jean Adam would not be there to see. She had ere this "taken her foot in her hand," according to the old half-piteous, half-scornful proverb, and gone trudging in sun and wind, in rain and snow, from clachan to village, from farm-town to laird's place, wherever she could hope to "fend" by such work as she was still able to do.

A townsman and gallant biographer of Jean Adam has tried to free her memory from the degradation of her having become a beggar at last. Nor is it at all likely that Jean was ever a beggar outright. But it is certain that she was a wandering hawker of whatever ability still remained to her to shape and sew, to bake and brew, to nurse the very young, and wait on the very old. The scant recollections which are handed down, sorrowful ones in their way, bear out this softened version of Jean's reduced condition. Mrs. Fullarton, an old pupil, told her daughter of Jean's coming to

her house in this character. Mrs. Fullarton had offered Jean old clothes, which she had at first proudly declined. But pressed by necessity or rebuked by her sensitive conscience for haughtiness of spirit unbecoming her situation, Jean had come back and taken the clothes away. This was natural behaviour on the part of a poor, half-dependent woman, but it was not the behaviour of an ordinary beggar.

Jean eventually returned to a harder state of service than that of her youth, when she was too old a woman to be capable of it, for her best days were long past. Her fingers were waxing stiff and her eyes dim. What had been but play to the light heart of youth, with all the world before it, was a dreary *darg* to the heavy heart that had known better things, and was now without any refuge, under the sun, save the grave. Probably it was because she was proud in her downfall—the hardness of her fate having soured the natural sweetness of her temper—that no friend interposed to prevent the end.

On the 2nd of April, 1765—in the spring, which is so softly balmy and tearfully bright in

that Scotland of the west—Jean stood once more within the shadow of King William's statue and of the grand mansions of the Virginian merchants. Stumbling into the presence of the merchants themselves, she went on in her faded tartan screen and draggled gown till she skirted the Trongate, and vanished in the crowd of the Gallowgate. She was more footsore than if she had made another journey to London, more faint-hearted than when she "swerfed" away after the reading of *Othello*. Her high spirit and tender heart were fairly broken. But a new dawn was breaking for her, and a Friend was waiting for her in a land that was far away, yet very near. Jean Adam was admitted into the poorhouse of Glasgow, by an order from two of the baillies of Greenock, as "a poor woman in distress, a stranger who had been wandering about." She died there the next day, and was buried by the parish.

Jean's champion attempts to establish the fact, that the poorhouse of Glasgow was then more of a hospital than a poorhouse, and that various persons, quite different from the modern

pauper, found refuge under its roof, and died in that shelter. Very possibly he is right. At the date of her death, the years since the '45 were not so many but that men and women more highly born and delicately nurtured than Jean had been, might have been thankful to live and die within those despised walls. Nevertheless, even a hospital and its bed were a woeful last home and bed for Jean Adam; and "a stranger who had been wandering about," was a woeful title for the author of "There's nae luck about the house."

In their subjects as well as their style Jean's published poems bear internal evidence of the source from which their inspiration was drawn. We have such titles as, "On Creation," "On Redemption," "On the Method of Grace," "On Abel," "On Joseph," "On Astrea," "On Lucretia," "On Cleopatra," and so forth. These poems are what might be expected—the unconscious reflection and echo of Jean's studies. They made no pretensions to originality, and the claim which was set up for them—that of correctness of phrase and propriety of figure—

would not get them a moment's hearing in the present day. Like most echoes, they are monotonous, formal, and inflated; frequently they are childish; occasionally they are quaint. The most quaint in plan are, "A Dialogue between the Soul and Curiosity," and "Curiosity and the Soul about the keeping of the Ten Commandments."

But it is unfair to judge Jean Adam by these poems. The English language was, in truth, a foreign tongue to her. She was not playfully coquetting with it, but struggling laboriously and painfully to master it, in such earnest, indeed, that she changed her very name to meet its supposed requirements — writing Christian and surname on her title-page, "Mistress *Jane Adams*." She might have succeeded in reading English with relish; but she could never write it without cramping impediment. But set her to her native dialect, and she could, and did, write very differently.

As there has been a renewed dispute about the authorship of "There's nae luck about the house," the writer of the present article begs to

state on what grounds the song is here attributed to Jean Adam.

No copy of the song is found either in Mickle's works or in Jean Adam's works printed while they lived. Burns wrote that "There's nae luck about the house," came on the streets as a street ballad about 1771-2—six or seven years after Jean Adam's death. Cromek claimed the song for Jean Adam on the ground of strong local tradition, and on the direct testimony of Jean Adam's pupil, Mrs. Fullarton, who declared that she had frequently heard Jean sing or repeat the song, and state that it was her own composition. This evidence was confirmed by fellow-pupils, and by Mrs. Fullarton's daughter, Mrs. Crawfurd, in the latter case with additional testimony. Mrs. Crawfurd, who had married into the family of Jean's early patrons, the Crawfurds of Cartsburn, wrote: "My aunt, Mrs. Crawfurd of Cartsburn, often sang it ['There's nae luck about the house'] as a song of Jean Adam's."

In 1806 Sim claimed the song as that of William Julius Mickle. The claim was chal-

lenged by Cromek, but this challenge was withdrawn when he was told that Sim had found two copies of the song among Mickle's papers in his handwriting, one of the copies bearing corrections; further, that Mrs. Mickle had said to Sim that the song was a Scotch song written by Mickle; that he had given her a copy, and explained the Scotch phrases to her, she being an Englishwoman; and finally, that Mrs. Mickle, *with a little assistance*, repeated the song to Sim.

This may sound at first positive proof, as it did to Cromek; but, besides the fact that the accident of handwriting has failed before now to constitute a claim of authorship, there is counter-proof, both internal and external, which contradicts Sim's conclusion.

What was supposed to be the original scroll of the song, from which the copy was judged —and rightly, in all probability—to be a corrected copy, not only differs from the popular version, but has phrases and words so thoroughly *un-Scotch*, and so many gross mistakes both in sense and spelling, that it is very difficult to

imagine how a man capable of writing the song could have committed them.*

The scenery, the incidents, the expressions of the song, are thoroughly identified with the west coast of Scotland; so is the very name of the hero. Mickle was a native of Langholm, in the inland county of Dumfries; he was some time in Edinburgh, and then went to England, where he spent the greater part of his life; and there is no evidence that he ever visited Greenock.

Mrs. Mickle seems to imply that the song was written and given to her by her husband not earlier than the time of their marriage, which took place in 1781-2, *ten or eleven years after the date* when Burns declares that the song was sung in the streets. Between the time of Mr. Mickle's marriage and the time when she gave these answers to Sim's questions more than twenty years had passed, and she had suffered from an attack of paralysis. There is hardly need to add the observation of David Hume, that "Mrs. Mickle was not a person whose evidence was of much consequence at any time."

* "Jean Adam," by Alexander Rodger.

The explanation which has been suggested is, that Mickle, more than half Anglicised by a long residence in England, took the song rapidly down from the mouth of a street singer, and copied his first writing, with a few corrections. The Scotch song to which Mrs. Mickle alluded, if it ever had an existence, might have been one of her husband's old English ballads —a very different style of song, yet apt to be confused by her with Jean Adam's "There's nae luck about the house," in a way not incomprehensible on the part of an Englishwoman.

Tradition has something to say as to the originals of the song. They were popularly held to be a couple named Colin and Jean Campbell, who lived at Crawfurdsdyke. "Jean made a great work about her man," and no necromancy was needed on the part of her neighbour and namesake to interpret and utter Jean Campbell's feelings on the return of her husband from one of his longer voyages.

The local scenery throws light on various details of the song; whilst other details, graphic and still more minute, illustrate the

prosperous middle-class condition of the heroine and the hero.

"And are ye sure the news is true?
And are ye sure he's weel?"

the song begins in a fond realisation of bliss, so great that, for a moment, it cannot be credited.

"Is this a time to think o' wark?"

follows, in the full extravagance of joy.

"Ye jauds, fling by your wheel;"

and then the triumphant, loyal lilt of the chorus, glad in proportion to the former rueful, lonely independence, sounds out clearly:—

"For there's nae luck about the house,
There's nae luck at a';
There's little pleasure in the house
When our gudeman's awa'.

Is this a time to think o' wark
When Colin's at the door?
Rax me my cloak——"

The singer has servants to do her bidding; she has already issued her orders to her lasses:—

"I'll to the quay,
And see him come ashore."

The "bigonet," or high-cauled, starched matron's cap, above the comely face, now flushed with honest delight; the "bishop-satin gown;" the "turkey slippers," and "hose o' pearl blue," were more or less costly articles of dress, proving the rank and wealth of the woman who could afford to wear them. So, too, a hundred and thirty years ago, were little Kate's "Sunday gown" and Jock's "button coat." The motive for putting them on in each case is the artless art of a heart which both loves and honours its master:—

"It's a' to please my ain gudeman,
For he's been lang awa'."

The two fat hens reposing, unconscious of their doom, on "the bauk," are a picture in one line of homely "couthiness," and the record that the hens have been fed

"This month and mair"

pleasantly suggests how Colin has been watched and waited for.

"Mak haste and thraw their necks about"

sounds like a cruel summary sentence of death;

but the wholesale destruction was in the best of causes,—

"That Colin weel may fare;
And spread the table neat and clean,
Gar ilka thing look braw."

How much of the mistress survives in the wife! The duty was discharged ungrudgingly; and graceful was the compliment paid to the enviable Colin. He must have been a good fellow to have been so doted on after many years had tried his worth. But it is also on the cards that he may have been a gruff and surly bear, or a dry and stiff dog of a man. Still the wistful question is sweet:—

"For wha can tell how Colin fared
When he was far awa'?

"Sae true his heart, sae smooth his speech,
His breath like caller air—"

and the joyful woman runs on—

"*His very foot has music in't*
As he comes up the stair."

This innocently insane delusion of the wife's, chiming in as it does with a host of similar

hallucinations, has made so deep an impression, that Jean's townsman thinks it right to append an explanation making known its peculiar significance. Those big, braw houses on the quay-head, with their foreground of land-locked water—ship and boat and mountain, seen doubled by their shadows—and their background of wooded heights and flowery gardens (full of Ayrshire roses as well as cockle-shells), had also wide outside stairs, with steps of sounding Norway deal, on which children played and women sat and worked, and which Colin, coming back to his jewel of a wife, might climb two at a time.

The last verse is the climax of the whole—the ineffable melting of the tremulous laughter into a sudden shower of tears, all glistening as they temper the broad sunshine of the heart,—

> "And will I see his face again?
> And will I hear him speak?
> I'm downricht dizzy wi' the thocht,
> In troth I'm like to greet,"

followed up quickly by the recovered bell-like ring,—

"For there's nae luck about the house,
There's nae luck at a';
There's little pleasure in the house
When our gudeman's awa'."

THERE'S NAE LUCK ABOUT THE HOUSE.

AND are ye sure the news is true?
And are ye sure he's weel?
Is this a time to think o' wark?
Ye jauds, fling by your wheel.
Is this a time to think o' wark,
When Colin's at the door?
Rax me my cloak, I'll to the quay,
And see him come ashore.
For there's nae luck about the house,
There's nae luck at a';
There's little pleasure in the house
When our gudeman's awa'.

And gie to me my bigonet,
My bishop-satin gown;
For I maun tell the baillie's wife
That Colin's come to town.
My turkey slippers maun gae on,
My hose o' pearl blue;
It's a' to please my ain gudeman,
For he's baith leal and true.

Rise up and mak a clean fireside,
Put on the muckle pot;
Gie little Kate her Sunday gown
And Jock his button coat;
And mak their shoon as black as slaes,
Their hose as white as snaw;
It's a' to please my ain gudeman,
For he's been lang awa'.

There's twa fat hens upo' the bauk,
They've fed this month and mair,
Mak haste and thraw their necks about,
That Colin weel may fare;
And spread the table neat and clean,
Gar ilka thing look braw;
For wha can tell how Colin fared
When he was far awa'?

Sae true his heart, sae smooth his speech,
His breath like caller air;
His very foot has music in't
As he comes up the stair.
And will I see his face again?
And will I hear him speak?
I'm downricht dizzy wi' the thocht,
In troth I'm like to greet.

Since Colin's weel, I'm weel content,
I hae nae mair to crave:
Could I but live to mak him blest,
I'm blest aboon the lave:
And will I see his face again?
And will I hear him speak?
I'm downricht dizzy wi' the thocht,
In troth I'm like to greet.
For there's nae luck, &c.

MRS. COCKBURN.

1712—1794.

IN the heart of the Southern Highlands, having the swelling hills of Ettrick,—a portion of what is by courtesy styled the Forest, where bracken is almost the only "bield" on the hill-side, and where there is a continual "rowing" of water and bleating of sheep,—every hope, cleugh, and water has its ballad story. More old castles, peel towers, and turreted country-houses, are to be seen in their ruins, near what was once the Marches, than in any other district of the same extent in Scotland.

Within the mansion-house of Robert Ruther furd, of Fairnalee, almost within sound of both "Gala water" and "Tweed's sillar stream," Alison Rutherfurd was born in the autumn of

1712; two years after Jean Adam was born in the sea captain's house at Crawfurdsdyke.

A great though gradual change had already come over the wild debateable land between Scotland and England, with its bold clans, lawless but for border law. Reiving and harrying had at last come to an end, and if men still "lifted" horse or sheep, or clout of household plenishing, the deed got its right name, and the thief his desert, even though he were an Englishman in Scotland or a Scotchman in England, and were not caught red-handed. Sheep-farming and "planting" had taken the place of more exciting enterprises. Gentlemen, indeed, still rode with pistols at their saddle-bows, and walked with swords at their sides. But they did not fire their pistols unless set upon by footpads during a journey, nor did they draw their swords save on extreme provocation, while their brains were muddled in a brawl, or in a set and formal duel arranged by mutual friends, and attended with all the ceremonies and courtesies of polite warfare.

As great a change had come over the women.

They no longer needed to place a supper-dish of spurs before their men, and to accompany the expressive hint with a delicate reminder that the nights were moonless. Nor did they now spend their time looking over the battlements in order to be the first to give warning when a rival chief or laird, with his moss-troopers, threatened a descent on flocks and herds. The women had ceased to be shut up for months of sieges, with the making of lint and the dressing of wounds for their principal occupation and entertainment. Their ordinary avocations no longer consisted in spinning yarn and carding wool, in baking and brewing, and in cooking savoury messes on a grand rough scale. Their knowledge was got from other and considerably more extensive sources than comfortable monks of Jedburgh and Dryburgh, and battered harpers. It was not even derived in any large measure from the monks' successors, though Boston was then minister of Ettrick, and was rearing a race stern and devout, long to linger in the lonely farm-houses and the shepherds' huts, from one of which James Hogg sprang.

In the same way the Border women's diversions had come to be of a different kind from showing their mantles and fluttering streamers at football matches and weapon-shaws—notwithstanding that the last were only dying out. The daughters of the Scotts, Kers, Elliots, Rutherfurds, and Pringles saw the battlements on their towers or the squares of their out-houses crumbling in decay, and walked safely in terraced gardens, or drove in coaches and did their shopping at Hawick or Melrose. They intermitted their spinning for tambouring and knotting, they concocted their cosmetics, as they cooked, by deputy, and from elaborate recipes written in feebly flowing Italian hands, with great defiance of spelling rules. They went to neighbours' dinners and gave dinners and even drums to neighbours in return, and they braved the danger and discomfort of bridle roads and country inns (where friends' houses did not chance to stand conveniently in the way), in order that the young people of the family might have the benefit of seeing and being

seen at Edinburgh assemblies.* The daughters of the country-houses were educated by their fathers' chaplains and their brothers' tutors, when they had brothers, as well as by their mothers' waiting-women; and when the family happened to be of more than ordinary intelligence, or to be of a decidedly studious turn, the daughters were fairly well-read and well-informed women. Not only were Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, Prior, and Addison on many bookshelves in lairds' and ladies' closets, but, though the women of the nobility and gentry had not a classical education, they frequently learnt French and Italian, and were very conversant with the former. This was not so much because of the obsolete national alliances which have scattered French words broadcast over the field of the Scotch language, as because of the influence of the *vieille cour* of the great Louis on manners, and the effects of its *beaux esprits* on literature, which were felt as far as

* In the letter of a Frenchman who visited Edinburgh at this period we find a list of young beauties, and in the list is the name of "Alice Rutherford."

Scotland. The number of soldiers of fortune belonging to the upper classes who served campaigns abroad and came home with foreign polish increased the influence. Corneille, Racine, and Molière, La Fontaine and La Bruyère, were as much the fashion in the Scotch rank that pretended to fashion when Alison Rutherfurd was young, as they were in English high society when Lady Mary Wortley Montague and Mrs. Delany grew up.

Alison Rutherfurd, of Fairnalee, was not a Burd Ailie of the old ballads, neither was she a yeoman squire's daughter. The Border lairds were as tenacious of their gentle blood and their kinship to the heads of their clans as ever were the duihnewassels of the Northern Highlands. The lairds were distinctly of the quality, and when their sons, and still more their daughters, condescended to appear at horse-races, wrestling-matches, markets, and elections, it was as kings and queens stooping from their dais and their chairs of state.

No detailed record has come to light of Alison Rutherfurd's youth. She herself writes

to her dear friend, the Rev. Dr. Douglas, of Galashiels, "I can this minute figure myself running as fast as a greyhound, in a hot summer day, to have the pleasure of plunging into Tweed to cool me. I see myself made up like a ball, with my feet wrapt in my petticoat, on the declivity of the hill at Fairnalee, letting myself roll down to the bottom, with infinite delight. As for the chase of the silver spoon at the end of the rainbow, nothing could exceed my ardour, except my faith, which created it. I can see myself the first favourite at Lamotte's dancing, and remember turning pale and red with the ambition of applause."

"I can remember, when I was seven or eight years old, there was a very ancient gardener at Fairnalee, almost blind; he employed me to clip his white beard, every Saturday, which office I performed with the greatest pride and pleasure."

"I am not sure if ever I was so vain of any lover or admirer as I was of the heavenly affection of your predecessor, whom, by his own assignation, I rode over from Fairnalee at six in the morning to meet. He had his fine, white,

bushy hair under a fine Holland nightcap, sheets, shirt as white as snow, a large Bible open on a table, by his bed, with his watch. He embraced me with fervour, and said I would not repent losing some hours sleep to see for the last time an old man, who was going home. He naturally fell into a description of his malady, checked himself, and said it was a shame to complain of a bad road to a happy home; 'and there,' says he, 'is my passport,' pointing to his Bible; 'let me beg, my young friend, you will study it: you are not yet a Christian' (it was true), 'but you have an inquiring mind, and cannot fail to be one.' Then he prayed fervently for me, and said he was hasted; blessed some particular friends, and bade me farewell. I never was so happy in a morning as when I was riding home."

But these are hints, more than aught else; and we must guess at the bud from the fruit, and draw inferences from what is known of the world in which she moved. It is clear that her judgment was early strengthened, and her wit sharpened, by cultivation. Her

character, her talents and accomplishments fitted her to be a leader in the most philosophic and brilliant circles of her day. Alison Rutherfurd might sleep in an attic room at Fairnalee, and sit on a hard, straight-backed chair, but she was not an ignorant rustic girl any more than a heroine of mediæval romance. Quiet times had somewhat thinned the country-houses in the Forest—the roads were execrable, and the fords dangerous—but when the country gentry did reach each other their hospitality was of the most cordial and generous description. Stray guests sat at their hosts' tables for weeks and months, and poor relations lived for years with their more prosperous kindred. It is impossible to read Alison Cockburn's letters without being struck with the close and kindly intimacies maintained from youth to age between the Forest families. To these frank, familiar friendships begun betimes, and so admirable in their constancy, might be owing much of the geniality which rendered her one of the warmest-hearted, while at the same time one of the wittiest women of her generation.

Within the circle of Fairnalee were Yair, Torwoodlee, Haining, Crichton, Elibank. Minto was not very far away; but only as woman and child could the two gentlewomen who wrote the sister sets of "The Flowers of the Forest" have met in youth, for Alison Rutherfurd was fifteen years older than Jean Elliot.

Alison Rutherfurd's claims to beauty must have been remarkable, judging from the beauty recorded of Alison Cockburn in her venerable age. She had auburn hair, the gold of which was unsilvered at eighty, and which she wore always rolled up over a toupee. Her complexion was probably the pure red and white which most frequently accompanies such hair, and which distinguished Grisell Baillie. Her features were aquiline, with a likeness to those of Queen Elizabeth—a resemblance which she increased in after-life by her fancy of wearing the sleeves of her dress puffed out at the shoulders in the fashion of Queen Bess's era. Mrs. Cockburn's portrait, painted by Anne Forbes,—who belonged to a branch of the Culloden Forbeses, and was connected both with the painter Aikman and

the Chalmerses, Mrs. Cockburn's familiar friends, —certainly does not flatter the sitter. It was painted when she was upwards of fifty, that epoch of middle life most trying to the portrait-painter as well as to the sitter. She is represented in what is now an extinct garment,—a striped silk sacque, fitting tight to the waist in front, but hanging loose from the neck behind, and terminating at the elbows in three wide frills. Over the sacque, across the shoulders and the prominent bust, she wears a black lace shawl or tippet. Her hair is turned back, and covered by a flat cap or hood, the ends of which meet beneath her chin. The upper part of the face is fine, though the eyebrows slant downwards instead of arching. The lower part, however, is spoilt, so far as beauty is concerned, by the artist having taken the face in profile, thus exposing the straight line of the short upper lip with the projection of the under one, a peculiarity which gives character to the face, but detracts from its beauty. A still greater defect is at the same time rendered patent—that of the retreating and

slightly double chin. The whole portrait gives the idea of a well-bred, frank, somewhat saucy woman.

A dignified and charming young beauty of the Borders was this that bloomed within the walls of Fairnalee. With her bell-hoop, her gauze "tail" gathered up over her left arm, and her knots at shoulder, breast, and elbow, she was a person of no small distinction; and to secure one of those riband knots on back and breast by begging, borrowing, stealing, fleeching or fighting, might well be a brag with the young Border "swankies" of her generation. Her own account is, "I was a prude when young, and remarkably grave; it was owing to a consciousness that I could not pass unobserved, and a fear of giving offence or incurring censure. I loved dancing exceedingly, because I danced well."

Few particulars are to be found of her brothers and sisters. The small family scraps may be shortly noted here. It was on the occasion of an unsuccessful love-suit of her brother—the future laird—that Mrs. Cockburn is said to have

written her clever parody of "Nancy's to the greenwood gane." A similar suit of his must have prospered in a different quarter. He not only succeeded to the lairdship of Fairnalee, where his gay Edinburgh sister was in the habit of visiting him, but to his (childless?) widow—"the jolly lady of Fairnalee*"—Mrs. Cockburn left a bequest of twenty pounds for mourning, with the charge of her favourite cat. There are also traces of another brother, whose daughter, Anne Rutherfurd, married Mark Pringle of Crichton. The latter seems to have been a son of the Mark Pringle who fought a duel with Sir Walter Scott's great-grand-uncle, Scott of Raeburn, in a field near Hawick. Having killed his man, the elder Mark went abroad, and was, for a time, as some said, a slave in Barbary. Afterwards he made a fortune in Spain, and returned to buy Crichton, and marry and settle in the Forest. So far as can be made out, this Mark was the father of the

* This lady is said to have been of Dutch extraction, and by her eccentricities of speech and writing, to have caused much amusement to her friends, with whom she was very popular.

Scotch judge, Andrew Pringle of Haining, Lord Alemoor, who was a privileged and intimate friend of Mrs. Cockburn's. Anne Rutherfurd or Pringle, was the mother of a third Mark and of Anne Pringle, the grand nephew and niece of Mrs. Cockburn, so often mentioned in her letters. Mrs. Cockburn had possibly another sister—the same whose death in Edinburgh is briefly noticed in one of the letters, and who may have been the mother of the "nephew Peter Inglis," and the married nieces "Simpson and Clerk," repeatedly mentioned. It is hardly necessary to state that, through Sir Walter Scott's mother, a Rutherfurd, as well as through her kindred, the Swintons, Sir Walter and Mrs. Cockburn counted cousinship.

Something more definite has been gathered concerning an early lover of Alison Rutherfurd's; and on the story there hangs a speculation with regard to the immediate origin of her set of "The Flowers of the Forest." In a lively letter to her old friend David Hume, written when she was upwards

of fifty years old—ten years after she became a widow—she draws a bright picture of one of the heroes of her fancy, Rousseau, and implores David to bring Rousseau with him to Scotland, and then, as if from a sudden pathetic impulse, she writes, "I am sure he is like my John Aikman." The reference is to an old story of one who died about the time of Alison Rutherfurd's marriage, thirty years before. She seems to imply that the story had been well known in the Forest, and that David Hume, from his former connection with the neighbourhood, must have heard the details, and would remember them. But there is another interesting letter—not addressed to David Hume, but to Aikman's own relative, and Mrs. Cockburn's great friend and "Browny," kind-hearted Bobby Chalmers. This letter was written ten years later, forty years after the death of Aikman, when Mrs. Cockburn was sixty-four years of age, and found her health beginning to fail. In characteristic terms, with mingled jest and earnest, she thus remembers a promise, and disposes of one side of a corre-

spondence which she desired should not pass into less sympathetic hands:—

"For Mr. Chalmers, with a parcel.

"As I had a warning bell in the shape, or rather sound, of a cough lately, a day in bed put me in remembrance of all I ought to do beneath the sun before I went above it; amongst the rest I remembered my promise to you, and in doing so, remembered with some satisfaction that I never broke a promise in all my long life. No doubt you would think yourself greatly obliged to me if, in my last will, I bequeathed you some hundreds of the king's image in gold or paper—how much more are you obliged to me for sending you the soul of a man superior to all kings for real worth and native humour! If I were not certain that you will truly value the gift, you should not have it: no, indeed for I much value them; and so you may see by the way I dispose of them. While my friends flourished round me I was a conceited creature. I set a value on myself because they did, and I thought them perfect judges. Now I find it was mere partiality. My value is sunk as they

disappeared. John Aikman's affection, tenderness, and sympathy for me surpassed the love of women! The pleasing big tear to his memory only allows me to bid you adieu. Continue to be as benevolent as he was. Adieu."

This John Aikman was the son of Aikman the painter, the friend of Allan Ramsay, Thomson, Pope, and Somerville, and the grandson of Aikman of Cairney, in Forfarshire, an advocate of some eminence at the Scottish bar. John Aikman is said to have been a young man of great promise. He died in his twenty-second year in London, where his father had established himself in the practice of his profession. The son died only a few days before the father, and only a month or two after the marriage of Alison Rutherfurd to Patrick Cockburn in 1731. The bodies of father and son were brought down to Scotland, and interred together in the Greyfriars churchyard, where an epitaph, penned by Mallet, was inscribed on their tombstone:—

"Dear to the good and wise, despised by none,
Here sleep in peace the father and the son;

Of virtue, as by nature, close allied,
The painter's genius, but without the pride;
With unambitious wit afraid to shine,
Honour's dear light, and friendship's warmth divine.
The son, fair rising, knew too short a date,
But oh! much more severe the father's fate;
He saw him torn untimely from his side,
Felt all a father's anguish, wept and died."

The correspondence between John Aikman and Alison Rutherfurd must have taken place when he was in the dawn of manhood, and she was in her girlhood. From the manner in which she mentions his name to David Hume, it is clear that the attachment was well known to their friends. Whether it was the prospect of Aikman's premature death, or some other obstacle, which prevented the natural conclusion to the correspondence, cannot be ascertained. But with regard to the date when Alison Rutherfurd wrote her "Flowers of the Forest," it has always been believed in her family that the song was written before her marriage; the very turret-chamber in the old house of Fairnalee being still pointed out by her descendants as the scene of its composition. If this tradition is founded on fact, the song must have

been written close upon the time of the writer's parting from John Aikman. A further tradition mixes up a nameless man with the origin of the song. A gentleman, passing down one of the remoter glens round Fairnalee, heard a solitary shepherd, on the lea, play on the flute a plaintive air, which struck the stranger's fancy. He asked the name of the air, and found that it was "The Flowers of the Forest." There was such an old ballad—a wailing lament which had perished before the collection of the minstrelsy of the Border, saving the two lines that are said to be the key-note of Jean Elliot's song, and two other lines which were recovered by Sir Walter Scott;—

(Now) "I ride single in my saddle,
For the Flowers of the Forest are a' wede awa'."

Having sufficient skill to catch the air by hearing it several times played, the gentleman repeated it to Alison Rutherfurd, and begged her to write a copy of verses to suit it. She recognised the air, and recalled a few lines of the old ballad; and, in compliance with the gentleman's entreaty, produced her "Flowers

of the Forest." Could this gentleman, with the fine musical ear, the love of verse, and possessing influence with Alison Rutherfurd, have been John Aikman, on his last visit to the Forest? And is it possible that the song owes its special pathos to the personal sorrow of the writer? If such a gentleman ever existed, and if he were not John Aikman, he could hardly have been Patrick Cockburn, for *he* would not have remained a nameless man.

Against this speculation there must be set the narrative of Mr. Chambers. In an account of Mrs. Cockburn, which embodied the recollections of Sir Walter Scott, Mr. Chambers states that the occasion of Alison Rutherfurd's writing her "Flowers of the Forest" was a commercial disaster, by which seven lairds of ancient family in the district were rendered insolvent in one year.

There is also the silence of Mrs. Cockburn and her relations as to any personal ground for the famous lines.

These arguments are open to objections, and even point to an opposite conclusion. Under a

striking figure the ancient tragedy indicated the untimely death of men, cut off in their prime by the cruel ravages of war, on Flodden, or some equally fatal field. It is not at all probable that a girl of seventeen or eighteen, even supposing her sensible and alive to every shade of feeling, would wrest the figure into an expression of regret for a worldly loss, from which she could not have been an individual sufferer. If Alison Rutherfurd's "Flowers of the Forest" took its rise from no calamity more primitive and sentimental than a widespread local bankruptcy (the present writers do not attempt to account for this rumour of the song's origin*), then it is most natural to con-

* Unless an explanation is found in a sentence of an undated letter which refers to Mrs. Cockburn's acquaintances as "all either fools or knaves, *as most are bankrupts*." In another paragraph of the same letter she writes, in allusion to a lady, "give her the song then, and as she has a taste for soft sadness, you may get the favour of Lady Fair to show you my Farewell to Fairnalee, dated 1st November, 1778." Against the probabilities of either of these songs being "The Flowers of the Forest," it must be remembered that Mrs. Cockburn, writing in that year of bankruptcy, mentions 1778 as a past date; and also that "The Flowers of the Forest" had been published about thirteen years earlier than 1778, in or near 1765. Under its proper title it was almost certainly already well

clude that the song was not written in Alison Rutherfurd's maiden days, as the first half of the tradition declares, but that it was the work of some of the visits paid by Mrs. Cockburn, in mature years, to her old home of Fairnalee. However, if the first half of the tradition fall to the ground, by what rule will the last stand?

As to the silence of Mrs. Cockburn and her relatives on the subject, one circumstance must be borne in mind. The marriage of Alison Rutherfurd to another suitor soon afterwards was calculated to shut her friends' mouths, upon grounds of common prudence and delicacy, with regard to all matters concerning her former unfortunate attachment. Her own mouth was not shut; but she only opened it after a long interval of years, and even then her words were not without reserve. Like many people who are outwardly frank, Mrs. Cockburn always shows reserve in discussing her deeper personal feelings. She pathetically sums-up John

known to Dr. Douglas, and very possibly known also to the lady for whose poetic taste he was catering.

Aikman's regard for her, but she is scrupulously silent as to the measure of her regard for the dead man. We may note another paradox in her character. Although she was pleased with herself and all around her, she was yet essentially a humble-minded woman. Her letters are singularly free from the embarrassment of self-consciousness, and in this lies one great source of their charm. Her authorship of one of the sets of "The Flowers of the Forest," published in her lifetime, seems to have been at once known; but, with one exception, there is not a word in her letters about her "Flowers of the Forest," nor a tittle of evidence that she considered it of such value that a full and particular confession of the circumstances under which it was written, and of the feelings which it was designed to express, should be put on record.

Alison Rutherfurd was not left to bloom long at Fairnalee. Whether her heart were light or heavy, she was married in March, 1731,* to Mr.

* There is a difficulty about the date of her marriage. The marriage register gives it as 1731,—she herself uniformly gives the date two years earlier.

Patrick Cockburn, who had been called to the Scotch bar a few years before. He was a son of the Lord Justice Clerk and a cadet of the house of Ormiston.* Her name is thenceforth linked with Edinburgh, where she was not only a lady of quality and a *bel esprit*, but a large-hearted, blithe-tempered woman. According to Sir Walter Scott, she helped to mould and direct the social life of the old, aristocratic parlours of Edinburgh, as the De Rambouillets and the Dudevants had prevailed and ruled with a rod of bright steel in the *salons* of Paris.

It was the old Edinburgh of the '15 and the '45—walled Edinburgh,—the High Street and the Canongate being still in the sunset of their glory. High heads yet looked down out of the crumbling piles, when the sweet scent of roses and hay in the Queensberry Gardens

* Mrs. Cockburn makes the following commentary on her marriage:—"I was married, properly speaking, to a man of seventy-five—my father-in-law. I lived with him four years, and as the ambition had seized me to make him fond of me, knowing also nothing could please his son so much, I bestowed all my time and study to gain his approbation. He disapproved of plays and assemblies; I never went to one."

was mingling with the foul smell of the city gutters.

The Cockburns of Ormiston were of strong Whig and Presbyterian principles, as well as of high repute at the Scotch bar. Mr. Patrick was commissioner to the Duke of Hamilton (who married Elizabeth Gunning). He was himself a Hamilton on the mother's side, the Lord Justice having married Lady Susan Hamilton, daughter of the Earl of Haddington. Patrick Cockburn is said to have kept the Duke back from the intrigues before the '45, after which his grace had hankered. A persuasive man and a safe adviser, therefore, was Mr. Patrick, but little more than this is known of him.*

Out at Ormiston the young wife was in the midst of the Murray Keiths, the Dicks, and the Dalrymples, to whom she formed a strong and lasting attachment. Very likely she ran with the rest of the world to stare at the Wilderness Garden, which Lord Grange was amusing himself in laying out; little thinking that he

* "I was twenty years united to a lover and a friend," thirty-three years after his death his widow recalls affectionately.

was yet to abduct his own wife, however desperate a virago, and banish her, without sentence of court, to a wilder wilderness.

Mrs. Cockburn seems to have been quite free from the Jacobite inclinations liberally attributed to the women of gifts and graces in these days. Perhaps too little has been said of the "canny" Tory ladies who clearly foresaw the end from the beginning, and did their best to win their rashly loyal or thick-headed husbands from their dangerous political bent. Too little has also been said of the more suitably-mated "cadgie" Whig ladies who entered warmly into the strife for Protestant and constitutional freedom. These fair Whigs on a pinch lent their husbands the invaluable aid of their lively tongues and pens in the production of those Whig squibs and lampoons which are now forgotten. The Jacobite songs in the end weighed down the balance by the irresistible pathos of "the troubles" of the cause which was royal and was lost.

Few men in Edinburgh could have had a clearer head than Alison Cockburn to detect

the halting arguments and deride the absurdities of her enemies. With what mingled feelings she must have regarded that march down the Canongate, with the red lion banners and the white rose badges, of Macdonalds and Camerons, Murrays, Drummonds, Mars and Wemysses, as they carried their blue-eyed Corydon, Prince Charlie, to a week's lodging in the Holyrood of his ancestors. Though many eyes have wept and many hearts have bled for it, the procession had glaring flaws and mortifying *contretemps* standing out in the eyes of the hostile and scornful Whigs who watched it from the background. No woman in the gude town, with its hosts of lawyers pleading constitutional right and justice in its ears, was more likely than Alison Cockburn to enjoy a little mischievous mockery at the solemn gala and its deficiencies and failures. None was in greater danger of abusing the immunity secured by her sex and station than the petted beauty of Fairnalee and the spoilt dame of Edinburgh.

Mistress Cockburn had chosen to get quit of a little of the restlessness and excitement of

the citizens during the siege of their castle, by riding out and making a call at Ravelston, where her kindred, the Keiths, were known to be on the opposite side in politics from her and her husband. But then as now, blood was thicker than water, and the half-declared fervour of the Keiths for Prince Charlie afforded a delightful opportunity for their clever cousin to twit them with his imperfections and those of his cause. Having accomplished her purpose, Mistress Cockburn was riding home again in the Ravelston coach, when it was stopped at the Port by the Highland guard, waving in tartans and bristling with claymores.

Judge of Mistress Cockburn's consternation when she heard the grim officer on guard propose to search the lady for Whig letters! She was hysterical—half with smothered laughter, half with angry tears of real distress for herself and her friends. She knew very well all the time that she had imprudently stowed in her pocket a parody on Prince Charlie's Proclamation, which she had written with great conceit to the tune of "Clout the Caldron," and which it

is possible she had just been flourishing in the eyes and the ears of the indignant Keiths.

A parody, still in existence, has been almost identified as this unlucky effusion of Alison Cockburn's :—

"Have you any laws to mend,
Or have you any grievance?
I'm a hero to my trade,
And truly a most leal prince.
Would you have war, would you have peace?
Would you be free from taxes?
Come chapping to my father's door,
You need not doubt of access.

"Religion, law, and liberty,
Ye ken are bonnie words, sirs;
They shall be all made sure to you
If ye'll fight wi' your swords, sirs.
The nation's debt we soon shall pay,
If you'll support our right, boys;
No sooner we are brought in play,
Than all things shall be tight, boys.

"Ye ken that by a Union law,
Your ancient kingdom's undone;
That all your ladies, lords, and lairds,
Gang up and live in London.
Nae longer that we will allow,
For crack—it goes asunder,
What took sic time and pains to do,
And let the world wonder.

* * * *

"And for your mair encouragement,
Ye shall be pardoned byganes:
Nor mair fight on the Continent,
And leave behind your dry banes.
Then come away, and dinna stay,—
What gars ye look sae loundert?
I'd have ye run, and not delay,
To join my father's standard."

It was a mild and ladylike squib in comparison with many others, but it was not likely to be swallowed by the hot-headed victors. Mr. Patrick, who had kept his Grace of Hamilton out of the broil, might not approve of being dragged into the thick of it by the rashness of his wife, although she was on the right side.

After Mrs. Cockburn had trembled in her mittens and *calèche*, the Ravelston arms on the coach saved her from the indignity of being personally searched. One may well believe that when she next wrote a parody on the Pretender to the tune of "Clout the Caldron," or any other, she would not ride abroad with it in her pocket—at any rate not till the rebels were well on their march to Derby.

Some years after the last Jacobite had suffered, Mr. Patrick Cockburn fell ill. After a long

illness, he died at Musselburgh in 1753, leaving Mrs. Cockburn a widow at forty-one years of age, with one child—Adam, a lad of twenty-one, and an officer in a dragoon regiment.

Twelve years after her husband's death, and ten years after Miss Jean Elliot of Minto is supposed to have written her "Flowers of the Forest," Mrs. Cockburn suffered her set, which is generally believed to have been written twelve or thirteen years earlier than Miss Jean Elliot's song, to get into print. She acknowledged, or at least did not repudiate, the authorship of it. She was probably already acquainted with that new "old ballad" of her Forest, which, while anonymous, had at once become very popular; but the circumstance would only form an inducement for the publication of her own entirely different set.

Sir Walter Scott wrote long ago with regard to Mrs. Cockburn that "she maintained an extensive correspondence, which, if it continue to exist, must contain many things highly curious and interesting." A portion of her unpublished letters, extending over a space of thirty years,

and until within two years of her death, we are glad to say has been recovered.

The present writers, having, through the kindness of friends, got access to these letters, cannot help thinking that they must be acceptable to the reading public. It has, however, been found impossible to give the whole letters here, owing to the ill-proportioned material which would thus be added to the volumes. As the next best thing, room has been made for extracts that surely need no apology. Mrs. Cockburn tells the story of her later life infinitely better than any other could do it for her. The woman lives again in her letters; and this not merely in her solid judgment, her quick intelligence and playful fancy, but in her broad Christian humanity, her merry heart, and her magnanimity, patience, and sweetness in old age and bereavement. Sir Walter Scott remarked that to his mind her great talent in conversation was unlike anything English, and came very near to that of a polished Frenchwoman. Certainly Mrs. Cockburn's letters, written very much as she

spoke, and without the most distant view to publication, bear an affinity to the best French letters. Their happy turns, their gallant graciousness (there is no other word for the quality than this word gallant), their acuteness of observation and of feeling, tempered with rarely-failing charity, together with their arch humour, justify a comparison with the best French letters; but withal, Alison Cockburn's letters show an amount of strong sense and pawkiness which is peculiarly Scotch.

The letters—many of them not longer than notes—are principally addressed to Mr. Chalmers, a solicitor who lived in Adam's Buildings. There are some recollections of Bobby Chalmers afloat to this day. He was of humbler origin than the good society in which he moved, but he was exceedingly popular in it, because his vanity furnished him with abundant capacity to serve as a butt, while his obliging disposition, in which indeed his vanity might be an element, made him an inexhaustible granter of favours. The following anecdote is told of him. Having paid a visit to London and gone to a masquerade

(both visit and masquerade, by the way, are mentioned in one of Mrs. Cockburn's letters), some wag of a countryman who happened to be present wrote in chalk letters on the back of the owner's coat, "Little Bobby Chalmers, from Edinburgh." Many of the masquerading Englishmen carried out the joke by going up to the stranger, shaking his hand, and saying, "Glad to see you, Mr. Chalmers. How are all friends in Auld Reekie?" Bobby, unaware that he carried his visiting-card on his back, was flattered by the general recognition of him, which he attributed to his extraordinary merits, and to the fame that had travelled before him so far as London.

It were idle to ask whether Mrs. Cockburn allowed herself to be tickled by the weaknesses of her friends. In the teeth of possible ridicule, her biographers are fain to hold that she was too loyal and generous to pick out the holes in her friends' armour, and show up their infirmities and absurdities.

Another supposition must remain unsettled —whether or not Mr. Chalmers's kinsmanship

to John Aikman, and the fact that he had been in the confidence of the couple who were early severed, did not lie at the root of the pleasant intimacy. One conclusion is unmistakable. Mrs. Cockburn cherished for Mr. Chalmers a sincere and lasting regard, which he returned in kind. The entire tenor of the correspondence establishes this, no less than the letter which she wrote to him on the death of his young relative, and that other letter in which she intrusted John Aikman's letters to his keeping. Had the hopes of the younger generation been fulfilled, Mrs. Cockburn and Mr. Chalmers would have been connected by the marriages of their children. Anne Pringle was the pledged wife of her cousin, Adam Cockburn, who, however, did not live to redeem his pledge. Anne Pringle's brother, Mark Pringle, married Mr. Chalmers's daughter, Anne Chalmers.

Mr. Chalmers either inherited or acquired some amount of fortune, and settled at Rosehall, near Musselburgh. To this place Mrs. Cockburn's later letters were sent—frequently,

as their superscription purports, by the fish-wives who were employed by both families. The letters which are not written to Mr. Chalmers or to his daughter Anne are addressed to Miss Henrietta Cumming, governess for many years in the household of the Earl of Balcarres. Miss Cumming had two brothers—one in the Heralds' Office, London; the other assistant to Dr. Roebuck, at Kinniel by Borrowstoness.

Mrs. Cockburn was a particular ally of the Lindsays of Balcarres. She was the bosom friend of Countess Anne of Balcarres, born a Dalrymple (who was, however, ten years Mrs. Cockburn's junior). There might have been a Scotch cousinship between the two ladies through the Keiths and the Swintons. On the husbands' sides, again, we find Lord Lindsay announcing that "the Laird of Ormiston was chief of a family allied to the Lindsays since the fourteenth century." Lady Anne Barnard, in the account which she gives of her youth in the Lindsay Papers, mentions Mrs. Cockburn as being frequently domesticated at Balcarres along with the earl and the countess; Lady Dalrymple,

the grandmother; the eleven children of the Lindsays; three maiden cousins; another old friend; a tutor and a governess. Lady Anne describes Mrs. Cockburn as having had "goodness, genius, utopianism, and a decided partiality for making matches; for which reason she was the *confidante* of all love-sick hearts." The match-making propensity peeps out decidedly in Mrs. Cockburn's letters. The interest in love-stories and weddings seems to have survived in her kind heart to the last. One or two published letters, written on the occasion of the death of Earl James of Balcarres, and given by Lord Lindsay among the 'Lindsay Papers, show the terms on which Mrs. Cockburn stood with the family, and illustrate signally her shrewdness, tenderness, and complacency, as well as indicate some of her religious views:—

"I am greatly relieved, for I am not so sanguine as other people to imagine a recovery in old age, after all symptoms of death; and I was pleased with Mary Baird's idea. I told her there was some hope last week; she thought a little, then said, 'Well, I'm sorry for it; for

it will be all to do over again—all the grief to them and pain to him; and how long can it last?' I thank you for taking me into the room and letting me see the venerable scene. Your letter found me in bed this morning, and I shed tears—a dew Heaven has denied me for real heart-aches, but they come from approbation—it was indeed gratitude to Heaven for taking away my patriarch without a pang. I have kissed his cold cheek—I see him! He liked me, and I truly respected and admired him. I am happy at his tranquil death; he was a man that, 'take him all in all, we shall not see his like again;' yet Colin is wonderfully like him! They (Colin and Robert) drank tea with me yesterday. Do ye know, they are better companions to me than your Sir This or Mr. That! I carried in your letter to Lady Dumfries; she showed me hers from Lady Margaret. Jeanie read out your letter, and, when you imputed the easy passage to temperance, Lady Dumfries' eyes ran over, and she found a lump in her throat. How hard it is to be yoked to one whom you hope to part from eternally! She

feels it. The news has thinned the play-house to-night; the Dalziel family were going and did not. Every proper respect is paid to the remains of our patriarch; and brutified as Dumfries is, there was a ball he and his family were asked to—'Na, na!' says he, 'Mrs. Janet; we will see what comes of our uncle Balcarres first. If we do not respect the dead, we will never be respected by the living.' Jennie Duff told me this, and said he ought never to have spoke again.

* * * * * * * *

"Much have you to see, much to observe, for you are born with a mind—which is not so common as we vulgarly imagine—and, alas! much have you to feel. Look on it early as a nursery where you are to be whipped into good order and a perfect acquiescence with the Divine will. The Almighty Maker of souls has various methods of restoring them to the Divine image; it is impossible His power can fail; it is impossible for His image to be eternally obliterated; it is impossible that misery, sin, and discord can be eternal! Look, then, on the erring sons of men as on wretched prisoners, bound in

fetters for a time; but recollect that they are and must be eternal as well as you, and that in the endless ages of eternity they will be restored to order.

* * * * * * * *

"See that you give your mother some castor in wine when she goes to bed; it saved my brain once after long fatigue—half a tea-spoonful mixed with her little finger in white wine will compose her beyond what ye can imagine—see it done. Yes! I will come over. I am not now the most cheerful companion, but assure your mother I am a friend. She is directly a widow at the same year of her life I was left one."

Miss Cumming figures largely in Lady Anne's easy sketches, while it is sufficiently plain that there had been no love lost between the governess and Lady Anne, her eldest pupil. But it is to the credit of Miss Cumming that, if she did not leave a favourable impression on Lady Anne's mind, she could inspire so fair a judge as Mrs. Cockburn with an excellent opinion of Henrietta Cumming's intellect, and a cordial faith in her heart.

Among the old papers which have been recovered, there is a hurried letter written by Henrietta Cumming to her brother James, from Mrs. Cockburn's house. James was established with Dr. Roebuck at Kinniel, and the letter is in reference to an enemy's report of him, which he and his friends feared might have been conveyed to Dr. Roebuck. The letter is full of sisterly affection, anxiety for the brother's honour, and gratitude to Mrs. Cockburn, who had espoused James Cumming's cause to the extent of adding a portion to the letter in order to condole with and reassure him. Mrs. Cockburn proposed to interest a friend of Dr. Roebuck's on the aspersed man's behalf, and offered to accompany his sister to Kinniel in order to see James and his wife in the painful circumstances. The back of the letter is endorsed, evidently in the receiver's hand, with the words, "From Henny and Mrs. Cockburn," as if he had valued and preserved what had been a comfort to him in trouble.

Lord Lindsay, in his Lives of the Lindsays, quotes another letter of Henrietta Cumming's, written to her brother Alexander, in the Heralds'

Office, begging him to contrive a kinship between her and him and some great North-country Cummings. She had asserted to visitors of the Balcarres family that there was such a relationship, and it would be awkward for her if she could not establish her assertion. Might not this letter be the carrying out of an unwarrantable joke, on which Lord Lindsay comments with due severity, or, at the worst, the momentary impulse of escape from a false position incurred by foolish vanity, rather than an act of deliberate imposition?

Miss Cumming married a Dr. Fordyce, a Presbyterian clergyman in London.*

In excusing herself from fulfilling an engagement which was no longer desirable, Mrs. Cockburn presents us with an old confident version of a woman's estimate of her sex:—

"Mrs. Cockburn is just informed that Mr.

* Since this book was in the press, another portion of Mrs. Cockburn's letters has, by the kindness of Miss Douglas, Cumin Place, Grange, Edinburgh, been put into the hands of the writers. It is proposed that these fine letters, together with the whole of the letters already received and partly used here, should be published along with the biographical sketch, in a separate volume.

Chalmers is speechless, and as her taste lies more in her ear than her mouth, she hopes the supper is delayed till his articulation is restored, though she owns he has a helpmeet who may make up for all his deficiencies—but what's a woman to a woman? Mrs. Chalmers knows that. Seriously, send me word if the hen hold or no."

Mrs. Cockburn was fond of pet names. Mr. Chalmers was her "Browny," Miss Cumming her "Sylph," and Anne Chalmers, later in life, her "Sweet Anne Page." The following letter has the first allusion to Henrietta Cumming by the pet name which Mrs. Cockburn bestowed upon her friend :—

"My dear Browny,—This is a day of trouble to me. I have parted with my Sylph with tears. I went with very red eyes to a supper, and met there the friend of Mrs. Chalmers, Mrs. Russel, who informed me she was very ill,—had been blooded! I believe no good body will either *stay* or *live*."

The Mistake, an exploded comedy, is neatly criticised :—

"Mrs. Cockburn returns *The Mistake*, and thanks. It's said comedy ought to be the picture of common life; in that sense this is certainly a good one, as it's very like the present world—very busy about doing nothing."

An exploded trick is denounced :—

"Such a trick upon widows! To put in feathers to make the tea weigh, great was our suspicion (a natural failing of the sex). If you had seen us on our knees about the division!"

A letter to Miss Cumming contains Mrs. Cockburn's account of her own gay doings, with her friend's supposed comments :—

"I never, I think, passed a busier time than I have done since we parted. Good weather and universal acquaintance is a most fatiguing affair; but I have little to complain of, since both body and spirit is able for it all. On Saturday we had a most tight hopp at Colonel Harris's, where your friend Mrs. Cockburn danced like a miss. 'It's a wonder to me that woman holds out. She has more levity than any girl of fifteen,—would fain be thought

young, I suppose! and no doubt setting out for a second venture.'

"You are mistaken, madam. I know that woman perfectly well; it's her humour to dance, and it's yours to talk. She will do as she pleases, and allow you the same freedom. And for a husband,—she has too great a regard for the male sex to appropriate any one of them, and too great a regard to truth to pretend to youth. But, for the same reason, she will not affect the infirmities of age; and if her vigour continue, will dance as frankly with her grandson as with any man whatever.

"Never was any creature in such spirit and drollery as Suff Johnston that night, to the great admiration and amusement of an American lady, who rather looked with the eyes of wonder than of approbation."

Suff Johnston was Lord Cockburn's friend, the well-known daughter of the Laird of Hilton. Brought up by her father purposely in a state of nature, she taught herself to read, and was, at her own request, taught by the family butler to write. She proved herself to be a very rough

diamond. If, as Lord Lindsay imagines, she was sister to Sir David Baird's mother, then she was a cousin of Mrs. Cockburn's. According to Lady Anne Lindsay, there was a standing feud at Balcarres between Suff Johnston and Henrietta Cumming, than whom no two human beings could have been more unlike. Mrs. Cockburn, indulgent to both, was either ignorant of the feud or ignored it.

In the same letter as that we have just quoted from, Mrs. Cockburn records her interest in the curious *cause célèbre* of the day :—

"Four times five hours, Mrs. Harriet, did I spend in the Session-house upon the Douglas cause, and heard them speak

'about it and about it,
And prove a thing till all men doubt it.'

There's nothing else spoke of in town, and though I was keen at first, I am grown tired of it."

The letter winds up with an appeal for the young woman's confidence, and a reference to her work, which recall the pretty performances of Mary Delany :—

"I think, Henn, I am entitled to all your adventures, and an account of all the works you have made under the sun, of the candlesticks that you have built and the birds you have drawn, of the hearts you have won and of those you have broke, and whether Auntie Cowan was right when she said Hendi Long was to declare himself your slave, with an honourable intention of becoming your master. All these, and much more, with your dreams of the night and your flights of the day, I desire may be faithfully transmitted. These are the works suited to my taste. But whenever you are idler than a summer fly, draw me a bold stroke for a pair of ruffles, only the edge thereof with much show and little work, and I care not though it be fruits or birds instead of flowers,—for why confine to imitate only one of the works?"

Miss Cumming, it should be mentioned, was famous for designing and drawing patterns of ruffles. She also painted on satin, and seems to have ambitiously proposed to paint a gown, and get it presented to Queen Charlotte—if,

indeed, she did not carry out the idea. (Was this in expectation of a pension which Lord Balcarres procured for her, or in return for it?) In one of Miss Cumming's own letters, she commissions her sister-in-law, "Minnie," to procure the material :—

"Pray let the satin be a white free of blue, if painting on satin looks better than on lute-string. Her Majesty's gown will just cost ten pound sterling. It just takes twenty yards for a gown and petticoat. I am willing, for the honour of the thing, and the views it will give me, to spend my means in that way for a year or two, that it may afford me much more after. Colonel Keith takes it in hand to present it properly, and to get me the shape of her Majesty's hoop from her mantua-maker. The shoes shall determine for or against it. Oh, such things as I am doing for my lord, of the bird kind, and of the flower also!"

Miss Cumming supplies another glimpse into these mysteries of the old work-tables :—

"Lady Bal begs you would tell her what kind

of bones is fit to make the everlasting white for painting gauze, as she is determined that her young ladies shall wear no other lappets but of their own painting with the painted suit. She proposes to have the bones gathered for you here, that you may have the less trouble in making it."

Henrietta Cumming had a love of legitimate art. She spurs on her brother and sister-in-law to improve their acquaintance with Runciman ("Runchiman" she spells it):—

"Runchiman's letter is worth the while. Pray you write to him, and lose not an opportunity of getting an account of all the curious original paintings abroad. An account from one whose skill is so much to be depended on is much worth. I return you the letter, Jamie, which is more than you ever do to me."

In a summer and an autumn of 176—, Mrs. Cockburn announces to her friends, Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers, an expedition to the Highlands, and a visit to "the faded Forest." On this, and on the impressions which she derived from the

changes of scene, she enlarges to Henrietta Cumming, who had just enjoyed a similar experience :—

"Your Highland expedition entertained me as much as St. Pierre's visit to the mountains of Switzerland. I'm not sure whether you or Rousseau writes best. Were I to return adventure for adventure, I'm not sure but I would equal you (not in description of places, though some have been noble, but modern); but the variety of people and characters I have seen and lived among for six months past afforded me agreeable observations. The works of God have all some affinity, and sure taste is, and always must be, the same, for Truth is one. I join with you in adoring nature. There are some noble minds, like your mountains, that the heat cannot melt, nor the rains dissolve—fixt they stand in all weathers, and though rough perhaps to appearance, are indeed friends most permanent and unshaken; others, smooth and even like fine verdant meads that tempt the traveller to try, prove nought but faithless bogs, and slump you go every step. I have

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seen characters of all climates and all weathers, and admire the diversity."

The next pictures are from Fairnalee :—

"The moon was eclipsed three or four hours ago. As if she rejoiced at getting out again, she shines with redoubled splendour; she shows the embosomed mountains that surround this spot, and the blue stream that runs circular around it. The half-naked oak is seen again in the small pond on whose brink he grows, and the tall shadows look like giants on the smooth-shaven green. Nature is all silent as the grave. Happy the mind that resembles this night—clear, light, and serene—who can behold this midnight scene without feeling what I cannot describe! Good night."

"The storm has desolated the trees. The ground is strewed with their fallen honours. I don't talk of the weather because I have nothing to say, but because I sit in a closet that is just in the garden, and shows me the scene. I feel myself greatly resemble those stripped trees—year after year has robbed me of my shelter and my foliage—but this is melancholy."

To serve as an antidote to melancholy, Mrs. Cockburn notes down in this letter a little country gossip which had diverted her, and called forth an effusion not unworthy of her "Nancy's to the Assembly gane:"—

"Here comes a secret I wrote to a young farmer, a lad very like one in 'The Gentle Shepherd.' He has been severely in love with a country coquette for some years, and she keeps him on till he is become the subject of much vulgar mirth—for few can pity that passion.

"A RECEIPT FOR WOOING.

"If your lass is coquettish and frisky,
Make up to her easy and briskly;
If she frown on ye, turn on your heel,
Make love to another, your heart to recover,
You'll quickly discover she would keep you her lover,
Tho' her heart be as hard as the steel.

"She will try all her tricks to entice ye,
Sometimes sweet, sometimes sour, sometimes spicy;
Affect all these humours yourself,
See that ye vex her, be sure to perplex her,
Provoke her and coax her, roast her and toast her,
She's as sure in your pouch as your pelf.

"If your lassie is modest and shy,
Watch every cast of her eye;

If she blushes, she's halflings your own;
Approach by degrees, her hand ye may seize,
And give it a squeeze, then down on your knees,
And prefer her to kings, or their crown.

"If she answer you no way but flying,
Depend on't she will be complying,
So follow as fast as you can.
But if coolly she stay, I'm afraid she'll say nay,
With such nymphs it's the way; then fast as ye may
Pray pack up your heart and be gone,
For ye may leave her to some other man."

Whether the "receipt" was tried and found effectual by a couple whose grandchildren would now be old men and women who shall say?

Miss Cumming was a useful as well as an agreeable friend. When she was on a visit to her mother, "first entry above Adam's Buildings, Cowgate," Mrs. Cockburn was out of town. On that occasion Henrietta "arled" a servant in prospect for Mrs. Cockburn, with whom the latter promised to be pleased, "as I generally am with everything within my gates;" visited Jenny Shaw, Mrs. Cockburn's servant in possession, and saw the cat, the predecessor of that which Mrs. Cockburn left in charge to Lady Fairnalee; besides executing commissions liberally

for the ladies of the Forest. "I have not seen Nell Pringle since she got her hood," Mrs. Cockburn remembers to tell Henrietta. "Violy was here, and says she's very well pleased with it and the borders. I would wish for a hood also, and about six yards of narrow borders to go round my double napkin; as it's very large, it need be only an inch broad, but it must be silk." Occasionally Henrietta herself was the modiste, and gave immense satisfaction. "Beautyfull and delectable," Mrs. Cockburn addresses her correspondent, enchanted by an effort of genius. "I came from my chamber, and found Tib Hall gazing with the eye of an artist upon my lovely cloak. 'I wager,' says she, 'Henny Cumming contrived that cloak.' See how artists know others' hands at first sight! Nothing ever was more admired. I visited them yesterday on purpose to show them my cloak."

Mrs. Cockburn took a lively interest in David Hume's quarrel with Rousseau, who suffered, in her opinion, in consequence of his accusation against his friend David. She had an old kindness for the cynic, and she

could not change it into ill-will because of her religion. She chaffed him not very reverently (for it was not a reverent generation) on his opinions, but her chaffing had at least the merit of honesty and good-nature, and was probably as effectual as more solemn and more bitter remonstrances. With her usual quickness, she makes use of nature on her side of the argument in a published letter to him :—

"I am just returned from a Highland expedition, and was much delighted with the magnificence of nature in her awful simplicity. These mountains, and torrents, and rocks would almost convince one that it was some Being of infinite power that had created them. Plain corn countries look as if men had made them ; but I defy all mankind put together to make anything like the Pass of Killiecranky. Were you ever in the Highlands ?"

The friendship did not last so long without being tested ; witness the fire, and yet the gentleness, with which Mrs. Cockburn refers to a misunderstanding on a very delicate subject—

that of her son's interest—which had arisen between her and David Hume :—

"In the meantime, I am as jealous as he (Rousseau) that anybody should pay for my bills. At the same time, sir, I never paid any man a higher compliment than I did you by being truly angry at you. Infidel as you are (and little, indeed, do I expect from any such), I marked you down as a man whom God had chosen to show his power upon, and that He had compelled you to act as a Christian in spite of your contradiction. To set an opportunity of serving me I own astonished me; and I had all the anger a friend ought to have. I have not been at courts. My heart is yet simple, though I have lived amongst men. I said to myself, Had David's son been in my power—I felt what I would have done. I had no indolence, no prudence, and I am apt to suppose my friends of the same make with myself; that is an error, however, I daily mend of, and by-and-by I shall be as much wrapped up in my own shell as I see all the reptiles around me are. Your answer, however, satisfies me; and I still

believe (because it pleases me to believe) that you would have served me had it been in your power. I have sent my son your letter."

Mrs. Cockburn takes David Hume's part against Rousseau, while, however, she is tender to the Frenchman. "Rousseau has a pen that can wound to the bottom of the heart," she tells Henrietta Cumming. "His common character is that cursed, suspicious, querulous temper. David Hume was warned of it, but his affection ran away with him, and I am sorry for his disappointment. In his (Rousseau's) long letter, he accused David Hume of the meanest things, which he is incapable of, such as opening his (Rousseau's) letters. It's my firm opinion the poor man is mad; suspicion is a never-failing attendant on that disorder. Great genius, with strong feelings, is too apt to crack the machine, and I sincerely pity him. I would not have David answer him in public, and yet I fear he will be obliged to do it. I am truly glad to get David home again; he's a very old friend, and I've long had a habit of liking him and being diverted with him."

On another occasion Mrs. Cockburn writes:—

"I have begged Mr. Hume to put in the Edinburgh *Courant* a very humorous paper he got in the London *Daily Advertiser*, upon him and Rousseau. It's the best thing yet published; mind to look for it."

Eight or nine years afterwards, David Hume's visit to Edinburgh and to Mrs. Cockburn, and the temper he was in then, are thus laughingly chronicled in a letter to Mr. Chalmers:—

"David Hume has been here, and is neither pleased with my voice, my manners, nor my diction; so what shall be done? However, Mrs. Mure shall carry me, such as I am, on Saturday to ———; and I am morally certain I will be vastly agreeable, because I am positively certain I love my company." Here follows a most off-hand invitation:—"Do ye always go out at night? If not, I am at home to-night. Hot chickens and Willie Swinton."

We have a description of a ball at Mrs. Cockburn's own house in her blithest strain:—

"On Wednesday I gave a ball. How do ye

think I contrived to stretch out this house to hold twenty-two people, and had nine couple always dancing? Yet this is true; it is also true that we had a table covered with divers eatables all the time, and that everybody eat when they were hungry and drank when they were dry, but nobody ever sat down. I think my house, like my purse, is just the widow's cruse. I must tell you my party of dancers: Captain Bob Dalrymple was king of the ball, as it was his bespeaking (tell Lady Bal that, as a nephew, she will take delight in him; he is my first favourite). Well, for men, there was Bob and Hew, young men both; Peter Inglis; a Mr. Bruce, a lawyer; then Jock Swinton and Jock Turnbull. Then, for women, there were Tibbie Hall, my two nieces, (Miss Rutherfords—Nanny and Peggie,) Agnes Keith, Christy Pringle, Babie Carnegie, Christy Anderson, Jeannie Rutherford. Mrs. Mure and Violy Pringle came and danced a reel, and went off. Now for our dance. Our fiddler sat where the cupboard is, and they danced in both rooms; the table was stuffed into the window, and we

had plenty of room. It made the bairns all vastly happy."

An assembly is the sequel :—

"Next day I went to the assembly with all these misses. Never was so handsome an assembly. There were seven sets—one all quality ladies, and all handsome; one called the maiden set, for they admitted no married women; one called the heartsome set, which was led off by Lady Christian Erskine, in which danced Mrs. Horn, Suff Johnston, Anne Keith; Bess St. Clair and Lady Dunmore humbly begged to be admitted to stand at the foot, which was granted. Suff was my bedfellow all night, and is just gone."

At another ball the musical Earl of Kelly appears under a characteristic cloud :—

"Kelly was at our Monday's ball, quite melancholy with the death of 'Bouch,' the celebrated musician."

The following incidental indications of the motherly, affectionate heart of the leader of society are only specimens taken at random from her letters :—

"Since Wednesday I have been in no small anxiety, and anxiety now does not agree with my health—it always makes my heart and lungs too big for my breast. Our dear little missie (her grand-niece Anne) has been in a fever. There's an ugly slow fever going about the country, and she has had it; but I hope it is abating. She sleeps in the room next me, and sleeps well; her pulse is calmer to-day, and I would fain hope the worst is over."

"To imagine myself anyhow conducive to the happiness of a worthy pair of young people gives my heart such a rebound as convinces me I have not entirely lost my Maker's image, but retain the appetite of diffusing blessings and being blest by doing so."

"Mrs. Cockburn's best compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers. She is much obliged to them for the offer of a party so agreeable to her taste, but finds her neighbours so distrest that she cannot think of going abroad to-night. She hopes the danger is heightened by a mother's fears; but there is real danger too."

"Will you write me how she (Mrs. Chalmers)

is? For, to say truth, I love the wife, and can ill spare a cheerful companion. I think there's very few left that can be merry, and though I'm not merry, I like to see it."

"You saw me just out of a sick bed. I am now just come from a wedding that has neither tochers, jointures, nor wheeled carriages, yet made six people very happy; viz., the couple themselves, their two fathers, and their two mothers, not forgetting some sisters and brothers, who love *love* better than riches—a very uncommon case."

"Dear Sir,—The accounts of your family somewhat transcends a polite card. I have heard by my good neighbour below-stairs that sweet little Kate is recovered—thank God. I this day heard Mrs. Chalmers has been ill of a rash fever, but better—thank God again. I will tell you once for all, if any of you are so impertinent as to die, it will vex, anger, and disoblige your old friend,—A. COCKBURN.

"Write to me, as ye shall not see my face in my house till I have a rope ready for you."

Here is an object of benevolence, with her claims judiciously set forth by Mrs. Cockburn:—

"There's a woman I must beg your interest for, and, as times go, she is entitled to your warmest friendship, being your *creditor*, a relation that in the mode of the present season not only begets compassion, but the warmest friendship and generosity. Now, setting the title aside, I do think Mrs. Chalmers's late grocer, in the Candlemaker Row, well entitled to £5 out of the exchequer. She has brought up by her own industry thirteen children, and educated them all to business; and she has not a shilling in the world. She feels it very sore to depend for bread on the labours of her daughters, whom she was used to feed; and I believe we would all feel it as well as her, though she says they are very dutiful. They are mantua-makers, and she gave them a London education. I have employed her these three years, and always found her an honest, clever, discreet woman."

Will the present day afford so hearty a recommendation as this?—

"Henry Duff, of the Chesterfield, is my friend Mr. Duff's son, brother to Lady Dumfries—the finest fellow ever was born."

Or a more valuable testimony to a friend?—

"Oh, Hena! a true friend is a rare thing—if ever there was one Lady Bal is, for absence never puts one out of her pow; and, besides, she can be constant, even though conscious of many faults—that is an admirable quality."

An old county election was making much stir in Mrs. Cockburn's world. Henrietta Cumming, in the country, sends her version of the affair to her brother and his wife; and Mrs. Cockburn, at the ear of the Court of Session, records the price paid by the unfortunate candidate.

Henrietta Cumming writes:—

"Alas! alas! I have no hopes of their (the family of Mr. Alexander, the loser) affairs on this side of the water—nothing goes right with them. The devil is in Lady Anstruther I believe." [Jenny Faa, beautiful and witty, was of gypsy descent, being one of the great

merchant Faas of Dunbar, as well as wife of the winner, Sir John Anstruther of Elie, who had his wife's extraction cast in his teeth on the hustings.] "She has so prejudiced the Sheriff of Fife in her favour that there is actually the most evident partiality used that ever was known in any court: everything is given against them and for her. Mr. William Alexander brought a party of Highlanders here, which he said was in his own defence. I fear it was more rash than prudent. They bragged they would soon set them off. Accordingly, the court sat upon these men, and it was proved that arms was seen on them, which was against the laws of elections, and they were all turned off save six—I know not for what they remain. I often take my ride to Pittenweem, and sometimes call on Mrs. Alexander."

Mrs. Cockburn writes:—

"Our friend Alexander, my Sylph, is really unlucky in everything. His brother's bribery has been so open it was impossible to pass it—not but everybody is conscious there is as

much on the other side; but the law is express, and he pays costs, &c., which I truly grudge—all the judges did the same, and even Durham thinks the Bench swayed mightily to the landed interest. It's said both parties are cast, and it will be a poll election—more expense and trouble. The very papers and proofs in this case printing costs £500. How many poor would that have fed! Lord Alemoor has never been out of his house into the air yet; he cannot walk a step, but in good health and spirits otherwise. The Bench were unanimous, all except Balfour and Auchinleck."

Here is a single sentence which ought to be written on brass, and studied by all critics who prefer to exercise their trade in depreciation rather than approbation :—

"A genuine painter ever abhors false lights and caricature figures; a musical ear sickens at discordant sounds; a moral ear abhors depreciating."

Highly-valued volumes of Swift, Goldsmith, and Burke are referred to at various times, but

there are others whose titles sound strange to modern readers, as those in the following sentences:—

"Thanks for 'The Pious Fool.'

"Indeed, my Benevolent, I never said I had sent 'John Bunckle;' it was 'Lucy Granville' I returned . . . . although here comes John! Peace to the souls that read him! He surpasses my patience; but Suff Johnstone wishes there were twenty volumes of him. How our sex love you marrying sort of men!"

"I endeavoured to get 'Donna Maria' for you, but she is not to be had."

Mrs. Cockburn was a voracious reader, with a frankly-avowed preference for fiction.

There are two rhapsodies written in a New Year's week, the one addressed to the Browny, the other to the Sylph, followed by more prosaic, but equally cordial greetings:—

"Peace be with him (whoever he be) that causeth the widow's hand to work with ease, who maketh her paper and wax to abound! His fame shall be as wide as words made of ink

can make it; it shall not depend upon words made of air, that may be frozen or zephyred away as Boreas or Zephurnia pleases. Lasting as paper, black as ink, immortal as poets can render it, be the fame of the Giver of the gifts of kings.

"Hereby underwritten we return our commands for the benefit of our benefactor. 'Sir, I command your Majesty to give our beloved ——— whatever place he chooses to fill, well knowing he will ask none but what he will fill with honour, and for your honour and service. This written with our hand the seventh day of January, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-seventh year of our Lord.

"(Signed) "DIGNIARI."

"Sun that ariseth on a New Year, granted once more to the mortal race of man, arise propitious! Let thy rays cheer the heart and fortify the nerves of my little Sylph! Warm and benign like thine are the emanations of her soul. Luminous and true as thy light are the images of her fancy. Deep as thy shadows at

eve and dark is her memory of times that are past—but thy mid-day beam drives the phantoms afar off, and she shines in the lustre of true benevolence. She shall live, O sun! when thy influence is no more. When the firmament in which thou presided shall be as a parchment roll—when the elements shall cease, and all inanimate matter shall return to its original nothing, she shall live and rejoice in her course, every moment arising nearer to Infinite perfection, perfectly restored to the likeness of that Original of whom and for whom she was.

"Come, rosy health, and deck the cheek;
Come, gentle Peace, of spirit meek;
Come, every fancy, new shapes taking,
Make gay the scene, asleep or waking.
Come, Melody, on soft air fleeting,
Attend my Sylph with gentle greeting;
And far be household care and strife,
And hopeless love, the bane of life;
All jealous fears, all heartfelt sorrow,
All anxious cares about to-morrow.

"Little Sylph, that walks unseen
On the ice-besprinkled green,
Of mind elate, of stature small,
Though small yet great, though short yet tall,

Send to heaven thy matin song,
Softly sweet the notes prolong;
And beg thy friend from toils may cease,
And close this year her eyes in peace.

"There, then, Miss Melpomene has thought fit to go to bed for an afternoon nap, and she will not give me another line, so you must even take prose for the rest. . . . . Make for me the compliments of the season to all, especially the patriarch. May he live a thousand years, and more! Blessing to all the bairns and mothers; long may they dance together! I hope Lady Dalrymple will dance at Lady Anne's wedding. . . . . Our Anne is boarded at Mrs. Hamilton's, and begun the music—she has an excellent ear. Have you got the songs of Selma yet? If not, let me know, and I will send it, to your New Year's Gift. Adieu, my dear Henefie.

"Fourth day of the year '60."

Then there is a sample of first-footing:—

"Thanks to the best of all Brownys. Is any mortal as favoured as me, blest with a Sylph and a Browny? To have these best of all beings restored to the world and to the faith is

a blessing given me alone; not to only that, but serenades are restored. At three this morning a very pretty gentleman was at my bedside, whilst the rest of the starved lovers sang and played at the window

'She rose and let me in.'

I will wait on you to-morrow. I intended a chair visit to Mrs. Chalmers to-night, but I think I'll no fash her and myself; besides, she would tempt me to bestow tenpennyworth of time upon her. Adieu, *ma chère* Browni."

Accident has thus preserved a love affair of Ambassador Keith's, with the very conflicting feelings which it excited in his friends:—

"Now for news. It is believed by everybody but Mrs. Baird that Ambassador Keith is to be married immediately to Mally Cheape; he is certainly with her every forenoon, dressed like a goddess, his equipage waiting, and a perfect bareface about it. I think Anne is staggered, and believes, as the devils do; it will disturb a fine society, and I am really vexed about it. I fear it is true."

Mrs. Cockburn did not allow her Browny's amiable facility in conferring favours to rust for want of being called forth. She could the more freely and fully credit him with the quality because she herself possessed it in no stinted measure. Without a moment's hesitation she employed him like a true friend whenever he could be of use to her—from procuring lint to be spun and woven "for Adam's sarks," to sending up herrings from Musselburgh. In the matter of replenishing her cellar, where the benefit of a gentleman's experience was a special boon to a lady, what he did not do at his own hand she required of him without fail. She drew long bills on his good-nature for her friends, whether the demand were brandy, "which is Fairnalee's sole beverage," or Geneva, which Mrs. Cockburn, in her character of a doctor, had prescribed for a sick lady. In the perfect simplicity and firmness of their old-world friendship, she "bids" his guests and bespeaks his escort with a certain manly *bonhomie*:—

"Mrs. Cockburn's best compliments to her

Browny, begs he will forgive her for substituting her Fairy instead of Miss Baird, who has so many objections, maternal, virginal, and prudential, which a fairy cannot have, being not made of dust and clay, and knows not man from woman, nor water from wine, yet is a perfect elve, and will warble at a moment's warning, and make the air mellifluous. As she's like to grow immortal before I think fit, I wish to hold her up, and have taken upon me to ask her in my own name as your guest. Will you forgive this intrusion of the genii, and pardon the possessor of the Browny?"

"*Ma chère* Browni,—I wish you would add to your list my gallant nabob Swinton and my comrade Bess St. Clair—if ye do I will forgive your negligence last autumn about the lint spinning. Monsieur Morpheus, or Somnus, took full possession of my person this morning. Of all my foes he is the favourite; you are next to him."

"Our Browny,—Will you meet your comrade Wallace and me at the door of the concert?

She cannot get a ticket, so must go in without one, and you must take care of her, and come home with me at night. Speak to us, and we shall see all about it. If ye can send a ticket, do. She is here. I have fine trout for night."

In nothing is Mrs. Cockburn racier than in her invitations and refusals of invitations.

"It is desired that Sir Alexander (Dick?) and Adam fix Friday for a taste of my cruse, with Mrs. Chalmers and you, at dinner or supper, as you will, or both. I like both best, but will have one, and I am very positive in my temper."

"Hope long delayed is sickness to the soul. If Solomon did not say this he ought to have said it. What Mrs. Cockburn says to Mr. Chalmers is that to-morrow night he shall be happy with his charmer Sophia. If he pleases he shall have a still greater happiness, for he will add much by coming to that of his friend and servant,—A. COCKBURN."

"Wednesday night,—If I could lye I would

date this Thursday; but as I really lye very long, it is Thursday night I want you."

"Mrs. Cockburn's compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Chalmers—would wait on them with a great deal of pleasure, but finds herself at a loss, as Mrs. Chalmers sets her an example of never coming from home, and as there is nobody she admires more, she wishes to imitate her in everything. . . .

"Can you tell me any reason for my not being to see Mrs. Chalmers when I have been these three or four days mistress of myself? None, except that *reason* has nothing to do with man or woman (!) but to reproach; yet I feel a certain inclination to impute this to a better cause, viz., self-denial, which we all know is a Christian virtue. I really am as well entertained with Mrs. Chalmers as with the novels I eternally read—but they come to me."

The following letter refers to the miniature of Mrs. Cockburn painted by Anne Forbes, who had been able to go to Rome to study there

under the guidance of her kinsman and brother artist, the elder Aikman :—

"Mrs. Cockburn's compliments to Mr. Chalmers—as she coughed all night she found herself so ill-faured she could not appear before the artists. She would always choose to be in the best light before Mr. Chalmers, especially when kept for posterity; however, as there is one person who really would be fond of the effigy after the original is returned to dust, she wishes to be seen by the lovely painters. The journey to North Berwick is put off till Thursday. Can Mr. Chalmers contrive a meeting? Would to-morrow at six o'clock do?"

In 1767 Mr. Chalmers lost a near relation by an early death. Mrs. Cockburn, who was then at Fairnalee, in a letter of a very different tenor from the notes "light as air" which she was in the habit of writing to her Browny, hastened to express her fellow-feeling with her friends :—

"This moment, dear sir, I am informed of the heavy stroke you and Mrs. Chalmers have met with. I am not informed how, but that is no

matter. I thank God I can shed tears for the sorrows of others, though I cannot for my own. I should not say so, for to me it is a real grief to lose a youth of such promising hopes, uncommonly blest by nature and by fortune. I have wept for him. I do feel for Mrs. Chalmers—from my heart I feel. Was he too good, do you think, to be left to corrupt in this dissipated world? Is it a favour of Heaven to him, and a chastisement to us? I hope so; I believe so. He is gone uncontaminated to the God who made him: he had beauty, parts, and fortune enough to have made him fearfully corrupted. How happy is it for him that he is called home early, before his spirit was sullied by the contagion of the world! I write you my quickest apprehensions of comfort; there is, indeed, no other consolation. I heartily pity his sisters! Alas! how can trash compensate for the loss of a friend and a brother? While I write to you in the fulness of my heart the tear blinds me—one cannot see youth in its highest glory laid in the dust without a tear; but it is a tear of approbation, for he was a

youth of most promising hopes. My best respects to his grandmother and aunt. I do not wish them not to feel, but I hope Heaven will support them under so heavy a stroke. I am, dear Mr. Chalmers, your sincere friend and servant,—A. COCKBURN."

Mrs. Cockburn volunteers a very honest and decided opinion on the Wilkes tumults :—

"God pity the King and mend the people! which nothing will do but a plague, a famine, or a foreign war—and well licket; no fears but they get it; well do they deserve it. There will be no civil war because there is no real grievance, and, besides, there is neither a head nor a heart to begin it. There is not a spunk of enthusiasm of any kind left, and without that, mankind are mere eating and drinking machines, and can do neither good nor ill. See whether Prophet David or I prophesy truest.

"I'm of Junius's opinion about Wilkes: they have made a mountain out of a midge."

There is testimony borne to a more soothing

strain, which might have had old associations :—

"Of all the sounds I ever heard—and my soul has soared to heaven before now—of all the sounds I ever heard, Colonel Reed's flute—well, it is amazing the powers of it; it thrills to your very heart. He plays in any taste you please, and composes what he plays. You know my taste is the penseroso, and so it is his. He played me five acts of a tragedy that went to my heart, and I spoke in to myself all the words of it. I would not let him speak the epilogue. You must hear him, Sylph. O how I regretted your absence to-night! but here is a letter will bring harmony enough to you. My niece Clerk was so good as entertain me with Colonel Reed to-night. He is a gentle, melancholy, tall, well-bred, lean man; and for his flute, it speaks all languages; but those sounds that come from the heart to the heart—I never could have conceived it; it had a dying fall—I was afraid I could not bear it when I heard it perfectly. I can think of nothing but that flute, so good night, good Sylph.

"Love to the good man of the law and his good woman."

A matron's troubles, whether for her own troop of maidens, or (more disinterestedly) for the troops of her neighbours, seem to have been the same in all generations. It is probable that Valeria and Cornelia were mortally perplexed how to get their "young people" properly marshalled for the gladiators' shows.

"I think, my Browny, that I was bereft of all understanding to-day, and that all my senses descended to my heels, for I had a mind to have spoke to Mrs. Mure, that she and I should ask Mr. Keith as a guest on Tuesday, in the place of Lady Balcarres, to matronise and patronise his damsels and nieces. It will cost you but a walk to Hermytage with the proper dispatch, and you go as ambassador from us all to ask the honour of his company. I'm sure you will approve of this thought, and execute it properly. Tell Mrs. Chalmers if I were not a dissipated fellow like her gudeman I would have seen her. Adieu, Browni.

"Saturday, twelve at night.

"Is it not possible to get Tib Hall as a matron? See about that."

"Dear Browny,—I find Adam so ill colded he actually cannot venture out to-morrow, otherwise we would lose him on Tuesday. I foresee a famine of men, so get a supply. I also fear friend George is laid aside. Pray why is not Captain Mure with us? He's a hearty cock. There should be some lads for the misses, too. There's young Innergelly and Bangour, ready for all manner of sports. Anne Wauchope is to go with me and Culdares. Peter Murray is our gallant. Get men, my Browny—with all your getting, get men."

Mrs. Cockburn could pay pretty compliments, especially when her heart was softened by the prospect of absence. "The seas" which she was to cross, however, were, so far as her biographers can learn, no greater than that frith which rolled between the Loudons and Fife, between Castle Hill and Balcarres.

"Mrs. Cockburn presents her grateful acknow-

ledgments to Mr. Chalmers for all his favours. She has made it her boast that he is of all her lovers the best and greatest. No proof of love so agreeable as an attention to the taste and fancies of a female, even in trifles. It is no diminution to her vanity that she is only a sharer of universal good-will. She feels the warmth of the sun, tho' he shines on thousands. And now, sir, having wrote a very pretty card, will ye give my service to the gudewife, and blessing to miss? I shall soon cross the seas, and must take this way of bidding you a hearty farewell."

Here is a coquettish enigma :—

"Mrs. Cockburn hears that Mr. Chalmers is ill, and is sorry because—let him find out the because. She is not well neither, and that's a pity too—tho' she never is very sorry for herself—and yet she has great cause. She salutes the cheerful—find out who that is!—and she kisses the innocents."

"It was like Mrs. Cockburn not to know

that she was ill," one is inclined to say, in anticipation of the next of these letters.

"Alas! your spouse and me never met. The very day after your Miss Anne did me the pleasure to drink tea with me, Halbert Duff, who wanted to carry me west with him, found out I was in a fever. I had not the sense to find it out for myself, as I had been ill above a month, and much deprest in spirit. I took it to be the state of age approaching, and was setting my mind to receive its cold approaches. However, a fever commenced, with all the applications of bleeding and blistering; and I suppose it was worse than I apprehended, because Doctor Rutherfurd came always thrice a day. It confined me three weeks, and left me a very skeleton. I am still weak, and eat far too little, but am come out to fresh air, old friendship, perfect ease, regular hours, and good milk, in my friend's house, Ravelston. I came here on Tuesday, and began to recruit on the road. I exchanged a bow with your spouse, who was in a chaise."

As a convincing proof that she was recruit-

ing, she forthwith indulges in a vigorous diatribe against women remaining single, and smartly suggests a cure; while she philosophises on the folly of the evil in a spirit that ought to delight the heart of *Punch*, or of a true Saturday Reviewer:—

"I must find fault with all my countrywomen, who pay so bad a compliment to my favourite sex that none of them chooses the sacred hymeneal tie that can live independent of it. It's really very strange. I'm clear for burning Sir Charles Grandison by the hands of the hangman. The girls are all set agog seeking an ideal man, and will have none of God's corrupted creatures. I wonder why they wish for perfection; for my share I would none on't—it would ruin all my virtues and all my love. Where would be the pleasure of mutual forbearance, of mutual forgiveness? Even as a good housewife, I would choose my lord and master should have many faults; because there's so much glory in mending them. One is prouder of darning an old table-cloth than of sewing a new one."

Having sympathised with the gaieties and with the parliamentary news of Mr. Chalmers, who was in London; asked if he had heard of Lady Balcarres' adventures at the masquerade, as Mrs. Cockburn feared that "our Haining" (Alemoor?) would pay for his gambols; questioned the particulars of Colonel Stewart's India Bill; and forwarded a message to Mrs. Strange (the great engraver's wife), with much more, no wonder that Mrs. Cockburn should conclude thus:—

"I must go walk. I have disobeyed orders by writing so long a letter. They say I waste myself with writing, but I deny it, for I think less when I write than any other time."

Mrs. Cockburn did *not* waste herself with writing, so far as posterity can see. The succeeding letter has the same untranslatable mixture of high spirit and unselfish lightheartedness:—

"Heaven's best guardians attend my dear Browny. I am not very well, not very ill. If you can cure two-score and seventeen you may

do so, but I am indifferent; and sincerely rejoice that the wife of my Browny's bosom is preserved to him, and to me, and to all who love and value—I won't say what. You ask my commands. I order you bid Peggy Crawfurd court Adam Cockburn. I am far from certain that she would succeed, but it will be very honourable, and he will refuse her genteelly, or take her kindly and truly, sans jointures and all the et-cæteras of the present times. If you find time, a letter will really be a regale to

"Your friend, A. C.

"I am going to live."

"1772
1713
Substract,"

at the end of one of the letters, is supposed to point to her age.

Here is one of her quips, the play on the mere letter of scriptural words being so comically pat, that the liberty may be forgiven, even by those who object most strongly to "clerical jokes:"—

"Mrs. Cockburn presents her best respects

to Mrs. Chalmers, and demands an account of her spouse; hopes he is not killed by the multitude that he feeds—his hospitality will be his death; but then he cannot live without it, so it's all one. If the black silk glove hath appeared, let it be sent; and let me know how my open-hearted friend in the scarf does.

"It's the right hand; and the left never knows what it does."

As a well-bred, thrifty dame, Mrs. Cockburn enjoins economy, and makes no bones in giving the advice:—

"That fellow Kennedy, if he cast up to-morrow, he will save you a groat, and I hope we will all learn to save groats. I hate all expense, and hope to see people set their faces to saving, as I do. I wish you would begin to set the example."

The next letter contains one of the first hints —pathetic in its simple brevity—of the deep trouble which for eight years and more must have haunted and hung over this merry soul that bravely bore its own burden, and strove that the shadow should not darken other lives.

"It makes you happy to make others so. Here is the comedy which has been a blessing for amusement to me and mine on this cold, anxious night. I would fly from anxiety if I could, but it pursues me, and has done for twenty years. If Adam would give over coughing, I think I would be happy; but something else would come. Let us take what we get patiently: fretting is to no purpose. I think it is an excellent comedy. * * *

"Your woman, A. COCKBURN."

We have a good explanation of a good present:—

"Say what you please, no storm nor frost can cool your heart. You send a good heart-heater to me, troth, and never a word about it. I fancy it's so good you could not sleep in the house with it. If the snow pause, I am to ——— to-morrow. Send me one herring. Love to the wife; she's worth ten Mallys and Nancys, and so am I.

"As witness my hand, A. COCKBURN.

"I will have two herring, now I think on't."

She attends the Peers Assembly.

"I saw none but the sick and afflicted, till I at once broke out like a star in the Peers Assembly, when I walked in by myself at nine o'clock, and was so surrounded by men that I saw no women till near ten, and then was as much rejoiced over by the women. I could not tell to what sex I belonged that night, for till ten o'clock I had more men following me than women; and the women for that reason followed me too, though some I do think for my own sake, particularly Tibb Hall and Mary Pringle.

"'A vast exhibition of vanity,' say you, 'in this old lady.' Very true, reverend sir; and I shall be vain while I live of the attention and good-will of all my compatriots—ay, and try to keep it up as long as I live; for there is nothing so pleasant and wholesome to the human heart as to love and be loved."

Perhaps no letter in the whole packet afforded such perfect pleasure as that which is scrolled over with copies of the address, "Miss Anne

Chalmers," in pencilled characters half an inch in length, and with a quaint tree, carrying quainter birds—the abiding handiwork of warm, rosy little fingers, that in their turn grew stiff and feeble, and for half a century have been mouldering into dust.

"Mrs. Cockburn's affectionate compliments to Miss Anne Chalmers. She sends her, as she desired, a pock of stuff for her babie; which, with her neatness and industry, she will find contains every kind of garment-stuff for a quilted coat, stockings, lace for caps, and fur for a cloak. Sorry she has nothing finer for Doll's sake, but prefers neatness in dress to finery, both in babies and ladies. She desires Miss Anne will present her kind service to her mother and Miss Katie."

The judge, Lord Alemoor (Andrew Pringle of Haining), uncle of her grand-nephew and niece, Mark and Anne Pringle of Crichton, was an old connection of Mrs. Cockburn's, and a friend for whom she had great respect and regard. An expedition in the old style, with Mr. and Mrs.

Chalmers, to Lord Alemoor's house of Hawkhill is thus recorded :—

"Dear Mr. Chalmers,—Can you take me down to Hawkhill between you to-day? If you can, send the chaise for me any hour you please, because I am not keen of walking the street.

"Yet yours, A. COCKBURN."

Lord Alemoor died in the succeeding year, 1776, at Hawkhill. How truly Mrs. Cockburn lamented him may be seen from these letters :—

"My dear Sir,—Violy (Lord Alemoor's sister) thanks you for your kind inquiry. She has never been out of bed since the fatal Sunday. She is, however, more composed than she was, though she can get no sleep. Anne Pringle and Mark are here. My hand cannot write right. We have lost all the joy of life—one with whom every thought was connected, either in joy or grief. Adieu, my dear sir. We salute Mrs. Chalmers."

"Sunday Evening, 6 o'clock, fourteen days and three hours since the death of Lord Alemoor.

"I thank you, dear sir, for your consolatory paper. It is well written. If it were worse, or

even indifferent, still I should be grateful for your friendly attention. I sent it to Miss Pringle, and will surely send it with this to Fairnlee.

"I am, sir, a veteran in sorrow. No human heart was ever more fortunate than mine in its warmest connections. The accidental friends of my youth (which can have no judgment for a proper election) have been what my most mature judgment would have gloried in acquiring, had the acquisition been to make. When you are told I survived my lover—my husband and guide of my youth—and after him the brother of my heart nearest in age to myself, you will think it a wonder I need consolation. My heart should be petrified or purified beyond the feelings of grief or any other passion. But I am not so constituted. God did not make me either a saint or a stone. In losing Lord Alemoor I have lost the friend and early companion of both these friends, and my greatest support under these losses. His superior understanding knew how to overawe, as well as his tenderness knew how to soothe, the passions.

He wished me to rely on his friendship, and I did so. I have no extravagant passions of grief to conquer. I saw and embraced his cold clay with the same feeling that I kneel before my God. I neither need reason nor religion to support this loss; both of them teach me what I have lost; the more I am mistress of my reason, the more I feel my worst. There lies by me a book which he commissioned, partly at my desire, and some transcripts of it in the reviews pleased him; it was the last book that was read to him, for that was the constant amusement in the sick bed. Half the first volume we heard read and observed upon. I have read the second; it is my only amusement; but when I come to anything that pleases me, how much do I feel! I remember every observation—not now, but twenty years back, for much his sisters and I had of that amusement with him. There was at Haining an old fir-tree I had known for forty years; it made the house smoke; it was cut down. I cried for *it*; one feels to lose an object they are accustomed *to*, even the old and useless. What is it, then, to lose a forty years'

friend, with all his great qualities fresh and entire! one on whose wisdom and counsel you could depend. Under the shadow of his wing you sat safe and sheltered from the storm. It appears to me as if heat, light, and air were taken from me. Indeed, his influence was great and beneficent; but I lose my own sorrows in that of his sisters.

"Next year is my grand climacteric, so it's probable the separation will not be long. He has left a brother worthy of being *his* brother in every word and action. He is what hearts could wish, but few could hope—a good symptom that an idea of virtue and worth still remains in this desolate, licentious age, where hardly any one that dies escapes being hawked through the streets in ridiculous elegies. Was this that when the funeral went up the Canongate it was lined with people in the attitude of sorrow, and not a word spoken, only deepest silence? You are too young, sir, yet to know what it is to part with the companions of your youth and the friends of your age; we *must* submit to it, as we must to death, however abhorrent to our

nature; and when we know that *must* is imposed upon us by the God who made and therefore loves us, we submit the better. Adieu! May you be as happy in your friends through life as I have been, whatever the partings cost you! I would rather be the friend of the deceased Lord Alemoor than Empress of Russia."

A year later comes once more "the season" in Edinburgh, with the old press of engagements and care for the enjoyment of others.

"You see Peter's answer. Our Jock will make one, so I fancy your number is complete. I hear Mrs. Horn is far from being well. Jenny Duff is feared she will not get leave to go. Could you procure me a concert-ticket for Miss Wauchope of Edmiston? She is a heartsome lass, and would do well on Saturday."

There is also a renewal of the old social gatherings, the inducements to attend which are sometimes so drolly and inimitably blended:—

"Will you step in here to-morrow night? There is a hen, veterans, and philosophers."

In 1779 there is a note which contains the last mention alike of Mrs. Cockburn's son and of Mrs. Chalmers:—

"Mrs. Cockburn's love to Mr. Chalmers. If he can bestow Tuesday evening on her and Adam, he will find something of the two-legged kind much to his taste. If sweet Anne Page come, so much the better. Compliments to the gudewife."

It is significant of Mrs. Cockburn's nature that there is, at this time, a blank of a whole year in her correspondence with Mr. Chalmers. It is probable that, during 1780, the year of Mrs. Cockburn's son's death, Mrs. Chalmers also died, as her name drops out of the correspondence from this date.

Adam Cockburn appears to have inherited his father's delicate constitution, and to have been in declining health for some time. We know nothing of him, except from loving side-

lights thrown on him in his mother's letters. But slight as these are, we get the idea of a character true-hearted and manly, as his mother's was open-hearted and womanly. According to the report of the day he was engaged in marriage to his cousin, Anne Pringle, who had been reared in a great measure by his mother, and who did credit to that rearing by her beauty, sweetness, and fidelity to the memory of Adam Cockburn, a faint fragrant tradition of all of which yet lingers in her and his mother's Forest. Failing health, slender incomes, and slowness of promotion may have delayed the cousins' marriage. Adam Cockburn died on the 22nd of August, 1780, having attained the rank of captain of a dragoon regiment.

In one of the lately-recovered letters of Mrs. Cockburn she thus refers to her son :—

"I am much pleased with my son's character, justly marked in one line—'endeared him to the few to whom he condescended to make himself known.' That is truly characteristic. He had a reserve that grieved me much, because

he could not communicate his griefs, and even tried to hide from me the pains of death."

In another letter, when alluding, as she often does, to the rarity with which she had shed tears for her own sorrows, she says that not even by the death-bed of her son could she find that relief, until she rose up to write to his intimate friend, and then the pent-up tears flowed in a torrent.

In her will, when bequeathing a remembrance of her to Sir Walter Scott's father, she refers particularly to the kindness which she had received from him and his wife at the time of her great sorrow. The greatness of that sorrow is illustrated by Mrs. Cockburn's reflections, many years afterwards, on another poor woman's trial, and by the wise, tender advice offered to the sufferer.

"I feel much for the distress of that excellent young woman. I have drunk of the waters of affliction. . . . . Should she lose her husband or another child, she would recover; we need corrosives often. In the mean-

time, if she could accept personal severity it would do well;—ride in rain, wind, and storm till she's fatigued to death, and spin on a great wheel, and never sit down till weariness of nature makes her. I do assure you I have gone through all these exercises, and have reason to bless God my reason was preserved, and health now, more than belongs to my age."

If Mr. Chalmers lost his wife the same year that Mrs. Cockburn lost her son, the common ordeal of sorrow, of which one of them never wrote a word in the correspondence between the friends, must have served to draw the two closer together.

Mrs. Cockburn's first letter in the year following that of her son's death tells its own tale. The irrepressible humour of the writer glints through the weariness and the scar over the wound in the anguish of which she had been dumb:—

"I took an airing for my health lately, and came in so sick. I dined on valerian and snakewort, a drug I heartily abhor. I intended that

day to dine with you, as I know your viands are always tempting, and I wish to be tempted —tempted; but Satan would not let me come, but confined me to my couch. Now, sirs, I beg pardon for being old and weak, for upon my honour I cannot help it. I love my friends, if possible, more than ever; but *you see* I must lie horizontal ways. I cannot eat. This season puts me in mind of what Swift says to Stella:—

> "So little gets for what she gives,
> We really wonder how she lives."

I declare I am so weak I can hardly walk; meantime, I cannot for the soul of me get my soul at rest. I must know how you are; send Anne to tell me. It's a little angelick figure that makes me think of those I am going to. Adieu, my dear friends. I imagine I may write after I am dead."

This is the burden of a few more tired, clinging, tremulously gay letters:—

"I wish Anne and you would invite yourselves some night to toddy and supper. I could

easily get more hands, but I have no strength for fabricating an invited supper. Yours, Saturday, Sunday, and all,—A. COCKBURN."

"Let me know how the child is to-night. Yours,—A. C."

"My friend, Sir Hew Dalrymple, is very ill; I expect the worst. Well, he has enjoyed the best of his palace, *the project* and *the prospect*. What are all our enjoyments of life but these two words? I shall outlive all my early friends. Thank God, I can adopt young ones with pleasure. Suff is fond of Anne—sees nothing like her."

In 1783 something of the old flow of spirits reappears in the offer of a treat no longer craved:—

"Mrs. Cockburn puts Mr. Chalmers and Miss Anne in mind that unpareleled brose is ready for them on Monday, 3rd, in the mansion of their friend,—A. COCKBURN.

"Cannot spell unparaleled."

The ungrumbling, ungrudging sweetness of

the next letters rises to nobility: it is a sight worth stopping to look at. With inexhaustible and tender sympathy, the old bereaved woman of seventy-five enters into the joys of others which she can no longer hope to share; only alluding to her own sorrows by incidental and innocent little touches, that, in their very unselfishness, go straight to hearts which bitter outcries and morose gloom would have repelled.

"I have not broke cover these three weeks; even in a chair been coughing with the utmost vigour. If I live till April I may be able to see you—indeed, I am growing very frail. You are well off that has such a companion as my sweet Anne Page. My Anne Pr[ingle] was at the Archers' last night, where was six set (my fair American came here at eleven to supper, and was in fine spirits with a country bumpkin)—people all merry, and men, women, and matrons danced. I love to hear of it—it's like the days of my zenith and health. Peace be restored to us, Amen! Love to my sweet Anne. Thanks for the crocus dish."

"I have received all your kind remembrances

of my good friend, both just before you went and this morning, by a salt-wife—a basket full of the cleverest, living, crawling creatures ever I saw—crabs, I believe, but yet when they are boiled they are like chicken lobsters; also three fine small trout—they look like river trout, but we shall see. I'm sorry and angry at your attempting to cast your cowl: mind not to be so young again. Now for news. I had a letter from Mark Pringle, where he says, 'The parties themselves being hurried, requested me to inform you that Mr. Shaw and Mrs. Menzies joined hands Thursday, in St. Martin's Church, in presence of your humble servant—who acted as father and gave the lady away—Lady Townsend, Miss Townsend, and Miss Montgomery. They set out immediately for Plymouth, 30th April.' Now, how to send this to you is the question. I fancy the post-office is surest; so, with my love to the lassies, and thanks for all your good things, I am, dear Browny, yours,

"A. COCKBURN.

"Me come! Alas! alas! long since I was in a coach."

"Thank you, my good friend, for not playing me a trick most of my best friends have done—to walk before me, though I am entitled to take the door by many years' seniority. I began to think you were worse, and had given orders to call when yours arrived. Happy that I did not hear of doctors, et-cætera, which would have done me ill, and you no good. I am so despondent now, I never believe anybody can recover, so nobody tells me of such friends, so thanks for dry and sappy. Now keep well, and oblige your friend,—A. C.

"As for me, I sit in my black chair, weak, old, and contented."

"Though my body is not portable, I visit you in my prayers and in my cups."

"It's difficult for me to inquire after my good friends, having lost my fleet page, Jenny. Sorry was I to hear you was confined by rheumatiz. I hope you are better. You would be sadly missed by your Christmas friends; for me, all seasons and their change is the same. I wear the same infirm carcass, and submit to its infirmity as cheerfully as I can. My love to the two

dears—may they have health, mirth, and lovers in plenty; and may you get whatever your heart desires, if it is good for you, prays your affectionate friend, A. COCKBURN."

With more deliberation and earnestness she records to Dr. Douglas :—

"Now I feel all the blessings of old age, and thank my Creator and Preserver that He did not hear my prayer for death when my mind was in a tumult of passion and despair. I now seem to myself to be seated on a height under a serene sky, looking back on the tempest I have escaped, and thankful to my Preserver for allowing me ease, eyesight, and a capacity to be amused with kind friends, and a heart grateful and cheered by their kindness. No anxious cares for futurity, no desires for what is out of my power, a wish to make everybody as happy as I can, or at least less miserable, a violent desire to be more devout than I am. I pray to be so; for God himself can only infuse the love of himself into the human soul, and, waiting patiently, I answer

myself, 'You are seeking pleasure here that belongs to a future world.' Am I right?"

"All the world are feasting, and I cannot get a man to eat a turkey with me to-day, and I think a female feast but flat; however, we must take what we can get."

Here is what may prove a valuable piece of information regarding an old beverage:—

"The balm will not be ready for brewing till July, for it does not grow yellow till then."

Next follows Mrs. Cockburn's description of the result of a fashion with the revival of which we are every now and then threatened:—

"Do you know, I did not remember Kate t'other day. I fancied her a Balcarres bairn—the nasty powder which spoils her fine hair disguised her."

The announcement of a batch of marriages does not omit the opposite side of the question, socially and morally:—

"Robie Anderson is to be married to Lady

Anne Charteris; Macdowel of Logan to Lucy Johnstone. Ante-marriages—a young knight about a year married has left his wife, as she is a devil and he cannot live in peace; Lewis of France has sent his wife to meditate in the country. You'll see a man here burned his wife just for a Sunday's amusement."

Here are miscellaneous extracts:—

"My heart and my taste in eating would soon carry me to a fish-dinner with you; the spirit is willing, the body is unfit for any sort of motion. . . . . I return the basket, full of thanks for fine trouts; they came just in time for supper, and feasted Colonel Lyon, Peter Inglis, Muir, and me. This town affords nothing but perpetual herring."

"I wish you would send me a pen, for really I cannot write for want; I sent a dozen and a half to a lady in your name. I have a receipt for toothache, cured a lady subject to it, and now has not had it for twenty years. Shall I send it to you? In haste,—SANS PEN."

"I own the temptation of my dear Mrs.

Mackay is great—I do not need any to come to you; but I am incapable of sitting on any chair: I have also lost all my teeth, and I cannot yet submit to let my joes see me so disfigured. You send me palatable meat that my tongue can masticate—that's right. When will we drop this clay tenement we pay so dear a rent for? When shall we meet in a better?—Yours, both here and there."

Is this saying of Lord Kaimes preserved? "Lord Kaimes is writing yet anecdotes of his life; he is also sitting to a statuary for his statue in marble. . . . . Somebody rejoiced to see him so cleverly employed. "What," says he, "should I sit with my finger in my cheek waiting till death take me?"

Mrs. Cockburn herself tells us the original of a toast which she had once composed—the same Sir Walter Scott erroneously applied to his father, unless, indeed, Mrs. Cockburn may have let fly her shaft with a double aim :—

"You know my earliest and much-loved friend, Mr. Swinton, has gone to heaven—as twenty-

six years since I made a toast to him, which may be his epitaph:—

"To the friend of affliction, the soul of affection,
Who may hear the last trump without fear of detection."

The winters were hard on the cheerful old woman.

"Do ye stand the storm? I lie it—my legs are of little use."

"I hardly knew I existed all last week, except by the exertion of coughing and blowing my nose. Now a blink of the sun has brought me alive again, like a fly; so I will send some black lines to you to ask how you do, and if you have got any new regimen from your London doctor, and what effect. This should be a gay week in Edinburgh, but I see and hear of nothing but rain. Oh yes! I have heard of two marriages, both to widowers; they must be true, because nobody could have invented them. . . . . I am as I told you; but, dead or alive, yours and the bairns',—A. COCKBURN."

"I hope you divert yourself with novels. I

have read out one library and begun another. Have you read ——'s 'Religious Opinions'? I recommend it, though his name is recommendation sufficient.

"I think it is winter already, for I am old and cold."

Dating according to New Style was a change of fashion introduced into Scotland in Mrs. Cockburn's day; hence this joke:—

"I enter my sixteenth year on the 8th October. A pretty miss!"

She writes of her birthday again:—

"I was once born in September, but now it's in October."

In age and weakness her sympathies were wide as ever. She writes:—

"It's a solitary life now. Selkirk Ball was yesterday; Lady Napier, Queen. . . . . I have thirteen sheets from Plymouth, with a full description of the royal, grand gala. O happy king! Poor Lewis!"

"This comes by a young man that wishes much to be employed in some stirring business in the excise or customs. If you will speak to him he will explain what he wishes and what he can do. He is an honest, clever lad; his name Sandy ——, born in the Isle of Skye."

Besides the toasts for which Mrs. Cockburn had a great reputation, here is an allusion to another old pastime—that of writing character, in which she had also dabbled like a busy woman:—

"If ye promise to return it, I will send you the characters of two ladies, writ forty years ago by a gentleman you know. Send your man on Sunday for it.

"To satisfy your curiosity, the writer of the characters was Monboddo. Delia is Lady Dalrymple Cranstoun, of merry memory; and Sophonie was her intimate friend, Mrs. P. Cockburn. You see it is rather a panegyrick than a character. . . . . If you like the Ossian poetry, I have found something of my own written in that

style. But, oh dear! this, my last and only pen, says, I am yours sincerely, A. C."

"Sorry I am you still suffer; these eastern breezes suit me very ill too. I feel every weak part—I feel I have a neck, an arm, a shoulder; and I don't want to feel any of them."

But, in spite of these eastern breezes, Mrs. Cockburn narrates the visit of an old friend with all her old sprightliness :—

"I had the joy of seeing Sir Robert Keith the very day he dined with you. He is ten year younger since I saw him, which is twelve years ago. Bless us! how we talked!—in short, we could not get speech for speaking. I intended he should take your Anne and my Anne to Vienna; but behold, he's off without either! My Anne thought fit, for love of him, to take the blybs: it's better it struck out on the skin, so it was but skin deep. . . . . I have dined four days abroad within these two weeks, which is wonderful. There has been a universal flitting among my people. Your lover, Lady Fair, has come down a storey."

This is not a bad turning off of her infirmities by a fine lady hard upon eighty:—

"I certainly did not get that billet-doux ye mention, as I am commonly ready with my pen. It's true I have been engaged for a week with so ardent a lover that I could not escape from his embrace. These Spaniards! His name is Don Sorebonia Rheumatica. He took my pen-hand so hard a gripe he would not let it move;—jealousy, I suppose; fear I should write to other lovers. . . . . My salt has lost its savour, but love is yours.—A. C."

Nor is this:—

"It was fortunate that I was asleep t'other morning, else I might have lost my reputation; for I certainly would have received you *à couchée*, as I believe my nightcap was clean. Had it been otherwise, I am too much of a coquette to have appeared."

"Doctor ——— said, and it's true—'None but fools or beggars can starve of cold.' To show I'm none of these, I'm clad this moment, and always am, in a scarlet flannel short gown

over all my clothes. Some of my lovers allege it is coquetry, I look so handsome in it, but I'm warm. . . . . "It is not my maxim but my nature to write what I think, and never to think what I write."

There are lively comments on the excitement caused by Mrs. Siddons's visit to Edinburgh. In unusually hot May weather, the doors of the theatre were besieged from eleven o'clock forenoon till five afternoon, and there were more than two thousand applications for six hundred places. The very debates of the General Assembly, then sitting, were interrupted, in order that preachers might hear the great mistress of eloquence.

Mrs. Cockburn could no longer mingle in such a throng, but she could hear of it with the greatest interest, and be entertained by its *contre-temps*, as this letter testifies:—

"She (Mrs. Siddons) has occasioned much mischief—broken heads, broken shins, of which Mr. Pringle is one; but he has made his sister famous for strength. When she saw him fallen

she lifted him up as he had been a pussie, and neglected to accept Duke Roxburgh's hand, which he offered to hand her out of the fray. I hear one man has got five challenges."

"I am in high provocation with the gay world. One would think the very mention of a Christian duty scares them from their pleasures. Nobody of fashion would attend Mrs. Siddons, because she acted for charity; and Paul might have preached for the Orphan Hospital—he would have had as thin an audience as Mr. Hill, who is next best to Paul. What can be the reason, think ye? Should not our magistrates have gone in a body to the workhouse? Pray are they a terror to evil-doers and a praise to them that do well? I dined yesterday with Lady Fair, Lady Don, Miss Murray, and Don Mark. I got a fine sleep after the fatigue of her stair. The influenza has come here. The treasurer has had it, but is so well again as to go to dinner yesterday where Mrs. Siddons is to be till Glasgow theatre open. Our lawyers have presented her with a grand tea-tray with a fine inscription.

Her curtsey of leave brought the tears into every eye. She needs no words: she can speak with every gesture, every motion."

Here are more free selections:—

"I was thinking of you in my bed, and saying to myself, 'I use my friend as we all do our Maker—forget him, unless we receive something uncommon from him.'"

"I owe my good friend and kind purveyor a vote of thanks for his kind card and fine trout; also for the sight of a rarity—a creel-wife that would not take a dram."

"I would not write my thanks so soon, but that I imagine Lady Fair is cheated of her pears. You said in your note to me, 'Compliments to Lady Fair, with a few pears.' I emptied my basket, and thought the man had gone in with hers; but they never arrived. *N'importe*, she shares with me. It was not the sober man who won't take a dram and has an eye."

"Have none of you got the Effie Lindsay yet? Neither has your obliged A. COCKBURN."

"I will make no apology—not *I*. I might as well beg a milliner's pardon for bidding her make me a cap. But to my story. One of the under-officers of my household, commonly called the water-wife, being often in a state of intoxication, I had again and again ordered her dismission, but found I had as little power in giving or retaining officers as the King of Britain, unless my Premier chose it. I then inquired what extraordinary merits she had to counterbalance her enormities, and was informed a little ragged child, who gets our sour milk, and whom I always supposed to be her own bastard she bore nine years ago, was only a foundling which the parish had given her to suckle (her own child having died), and that she had maintained the child ever since, getting nothing from the Kirk-session but her nurse-fee. I own this made a full excuse for all her sins. I have got the little creature some clean clothes, and find her the cleverest errand-goer I ever saw, and most distinct at a long message, and as literal as Homer's messengers. I also find a little deranged sister of the water-

carrier's has taught her the Catechism, and learned her to read. Now comes my use for you. Mrs. Douglas's uncle, Mr. Tod, is Father to the Orphan Hospital; and by the account I hear of that house, I think if our young ladies were educated there instead of boarding-schools, it would make a general reform of manners. Now, if this poor child grew up under the wings of the water-wife! Alas! she has fine black eyes. In short, I have set my heart on preserving her from my friend; so, if you will petition Mr. Tod, you will greatly oblige me, and secondly, do a real act of charity. Her name is Christie Fletcher, for she was found in a stair of Fletcher's Land. I congratulate you on getting my niece, Mrs. Sands, for a neighbour. You will find her a well-bred, entertaining woman, and him a plain, worthy man.

"I have no more time. Consider now what has been said, and lay it to heart. Amen."

Here we have a shrewd definition:—

"I know not what to say about our poor king.

The prince feels he is a son. Yorke is a two-legged animal."

Again news of marriages,—the first two contemplated under exceptional circumstances :—

"I have a long letter just now from Anne Keith. All doing well with Lord Bal. He is so keen of his brother's wedding, he has made a point of Lady Dick (the bride's mother) coming over and having the marriage performed at his bedside. They are to humour him."

"What think ye of Andrew Stewart's wedding? Threescore is a reasonable age.

"Yea, Stewart gave his brother £10,000 on the wedding-day. Glad the excellent Dempster can dance yet. I had the mind to dance an election minuet for him at St. Andrew's with a candle-maker."

"What think ye of cousin Mackay's wedding? She has strange luck to Highlanders. God bless you! Amen.

"Perhaps you have not heard of her wedding, so I will tell you. She was married Thursday morning in the Abbey to Mr. Farquhar-

son, of Invercauld, and went away with him directly."

The author of "Auld Robin Gray" was known from childhood to Mrs. Cockburn, who could hardly fail to be acquainted with the fact of the authorship; but Lady Anne Lindsay swore her friends to secrecy, and there is no allusion to the ballad in the personal description of the writer, even at a time when in the world of fashion the "Werther hat" had given place to the "Robin Gray hat."

"I had a visit yesterday from the Dowager Lady Balcarres and her two fair daughters, Lady Anne and Lady Margaret, who, I assure you, are so far from being the worse of the wearing that they are handsomer than ever. Lady Anne is grown not jolly, but plump, which has greatly improved her looks."

Mrs. Cockburn had still a few old friends to lose and to mourn for. This friend's death she had foreboded:—

"My old friend Sir Hew Dalrymple is going fast. I fancy Mrs. Dalrymple and the children should have been in last week for the High School. By their not coming I reckon he is worse."

"How are you, my friend? I should have thanked you before now for goodies, but really both my mentals and corporals were frost-bound. My earliest companion and constant friend he was, Sir Hew Dalrymple, died Tuesday last."

"This minute my young favourite has been with me. His grandfather's corpse will not come till Tuesday se'nnight. It's ten days yesterday since he died. None of us can tell the reason of the delay. Hew has just read me the chapter he wishes for the funeral sermon—thirteenth chapter, First Corinthians. He says all his failings proceeded from charity. What a noble boy he is!"

"My fingers and my fancy are frozen, but my heart is warmly yours.—A. C.

"My old friend is to be buried to-morrow."

The old lady was delighted with "Burke on

the French Revolution," and it provoked some sparks of her former vivacity:—

"What are the natural rights of man?
To oppress the weak, take all they can.
What are the natural rights of woman?
If she does not like her spouse, to take another man.
From natural rights, from liberty,
Good Lord deliver me! Amen.

"I am quite in love with Burke. Who would have thought it? My mind agrees in every sentiment he utters. Such a book has not appeared for a century."

This is probably Mrs. Cockburn's last poetical epistle:—

"While time runs on, and years are flying,
True affection's never dying;
Its proofs are annuals strong and clear,
Which I receive from Chalmers dear.
Dull thanks in prose I would not send,
And said, 'Dear Muse, now pray attend.'
She came, but with her came a blast,
So white, so strong, she would not stay,
And bid me say 'Good day, good day.'"

"Health, love, and peace be with my earliest friend and his most excellent nymphs this and

every year of their lives. Thanks for all your good gifts, especially the capacious Dutchman. It is the first goody I ever appropriated to my sole use. No, I indulged Lady Fair in a dram of it; but never told the giver, for fear of jealousy. . . . . This is my first penmanship of the year, from your sincére friend, on her own bed, her own back, writ with her own hand; so witness my mark, A. C."

Mrs. Cockburn writes again:—

"Always willing to contribute to the ease and pleasure of others, why should you suffer pain? I wish I could transfer it to some who never feel but for themselves. But we are assured from good authority chastisement is a proof of the love of our heavenly Parent. Who, then, would not kiss the rod?"

"Are you not starved? I imagine this winter will congeal my blood; and so adieu to my good friend, but not for ever—no, no."

"May you be ever free from pain and salt-pans! Amen."

"It is long since I heard of or from my dear

friend. I fear you are in distress. Do let somebody tell me about you. I hope the dear wenches are well. I expected Mark and Anne all the week, and delayed writing till Anne should see you, but they are not arrived. . . . . I am, with my blessing to you and the bairns, your deaf, blind, lame, sincere friend, A. COCKBURN."

Yet the kindly old woman took pains to write "to Anne, my friend," such good advice as the following :—

"I greatly disapprove of the licentiousness of publishing living characters. Satire, no doubt, is one weapon to scourge vice and folly; but it rather hinders than mends when roughly handled. . . . . A delicate music does more good to the human mind than any satire. Two lines have often made me assume a cheerful air when I was sad at heart :—

> 'What a beautiful creature 's a woman of reason,
> Never grave out of pride, never gay out of season!'

"Never read bad characters, my dear Anne."

After penmanship had become a task to her, Mrs. Cockburn could, for the gratification of a young girl's curiosity, laboriously take down "the list of Selkirk Ball, which turned out very heartsome." Then come two long columns of ladies and gentlemen, with the summing-up,—"Everybody danced with everybody,"—and the careful chronicling of a class of sovereigns who have long been deposed:—"Whytebank and Miss Elliot, King and Queen. Mrs. Mackay, Queen-elect for next ball; Mr. Ogilvy (the nabob), King."

Here is a treat Mrs. Cockburn is still able to enjoy; and what she can enjoy, she enjoys to the last:—

"I was yesterday on a grand expedition—went with Violy Pringle and Lady Fair in a carriage to see Raeburn's pictures. Wonderful was the sights!—I saw 'Edinburgh going out of Town;' the 'Tron Kirk,' my delight; 'View of the South Bridge, College,' &c. As for Raeburn, nothing can equal that picture of 'Sir John and Lady Clerk.' Lady Arniston looked so glad to see me, I had almost kissed her. Tib

Hall,—her very self. After all this, I dined with Lady Don: a farewell dinner to our dear American family, who sail to-morrow. God grant a safe voyage! What a charge for a mother—five fine creatures! No, no, for all your questions. Lady Fair and all the Pringles well. Mark arrived at eleven last night. I have not yet seen him, as it is only eleven o'clock. I must go back to Raeburn. There is John Macgowan in high beauty; he's very nicely drest; he really makes as good a figure as any in the room. I wish I saw you and your two nymphs on one canvas; you sitting, Kate giving you tea or wine, Anne at the harpsichord. I am sorry you still feel you have a jawbone. My tongue has done a great deal of business, for at last it has pushed out two teeth that were very fashious. My blessing to the misses, and believe me, though sans teeth, never sans love to you, while A. COCKBURN."

This birthday, with its appropriate feast, was very nearly the last:—

"A liberal heart deviseth liberal things; yet

you did not know what you sent will grace my birthday—the first I have kept at home. Good Lady Fair made me keep it with her for twenty-five years, and she insists on me giving her a dinner that day. I have not been down my stair since that day twelvemonths. More venerable than me? That's impossible. I set down my years to sum them up, and see:—

A Virgin	17
A Wife	22
A Mother	49
A Widow	39
	127

A goodly sum! and really, to be a woman of a hundred and twenty-seven, I write tolerable, though I can hardly read it myself. . . . . Would I had the power to remove pain! No; bodily evil is soul's physick. Our Master knows best. I hope we will not need the grace of patience in the other world—much needed here."

"The note that brought the goodies said she would call next day, so I wrote the enclosed. She got the basket. You certainly mistook—you said you had sent a little bottle,

instead of which it was the widow's cruse. The people drank Mr. Chalmers, and the health of the day (being my birthday), out of it. The cruse was remarkable. It's a pity woman does not mend with age, as wine does. Shall I tell you my company? First, your lover, our Lady Fair, with her miss; secondly, niece Simpson and her miss; Suff Johnstone and me made a woman; Colonel Lyon, nephew Peter Inglis, and the Laird of Dunnottar. Pity society should fatigue. I enjoyed my friends, for spirit was willing—flesh weak indeed.—Yours sincerely, A. C."

So the curtain falls on a wonderful glimpse of the old life of Crighton Street and Castle Hill, with its sunny foreground and dark background—the latter "the soul's physick," as its bright old heroine wrote, to prevent the former becoming a hard, cold glare.

In Alison Cockburn's long career—which was long enough to make her a connecting-link between the Edinburgh of Allan Ramsay and Burns, and the Edinburgh of Scott—her house

was the rallying-ground, while she was herself a queen, of the literati of Edinburgh.

In a letter dated 1786 Mrs. Cockburn writes:—

"The town is at present agog with the ploughman poet, who receives adulation with native dignity, and is the very figure of his profession, strong and coarse, but has a most enthusiastic heart of love. He has seen Duchess Gordon and all the gay world: his favourite for looks and manners is Bess Burnet—no bad judge, indeed."

In another letter:—

"Sorry I am my poems are not returned from niece Scott, though she promised them this week. I would have been glad to oblige Miss Douglas with them. The one I admire most is the 'Cottar's Saturday Night.' The man will be spoiled, if he can spoil; but he keeps his simple manners, and is quite sober. No doubt he will be at the Hunters' Ball to-morrow, which has made all women and milliners mad. Not a gauze-cap under two guineas—many ten, twelve, &c."

In a third letter she asks :—

"Are you fond of poetry? Do you know Burns? I am to get a very pretty little thing he calls 'The Rosebud.' Maybe I'll send it next week. I wish I could write a ballad called 'The Forest Restored!'"

This curious reminiscence of Sir Walter Scott's youth has been already published in Lockhart's "Life of Scott:"—

"I last night supped in Mr. Walter Scott's. He has the most extraordinary genius of a boy I ever saw. He was reading a poem to his mother when I went in. I made him read on; it was a description of a shipwreck. His passion rose with the storm; he lifted up his eyes and hands. 'There's the mast gone,' says he; 'crash it goes: they will all perish!' After his agitation he turns to me. 'That is too melancholy,' says he; 'I had better read you somewhat more amusing.' I preferred a little chat, and asked his opinion of Milton and other books he was reading, which he gave me wonderfully indeed. One of his observations was,

'How strange it was that Adam, just new come into the world, should know everything. That must be the poet's fancy,' says he. But when told he was created perfect by God himself, he instantly yielded. When he was taken to bed last night he told his aunt he liked that lady. 'What lady?' says she. 'Why, Mrs. Cockburn; for I think she's a *virtuoso* like myself.' 'Dear Walter,' says his aunt, 'what is a *virtuoso?*' 'Don't you know? Why, it's one who will know everything.' Now, sir, you will think this a very silly story. Pray what age do you suppose that boy to be? Name it now before I tell you. 'Why, twelve or fourteen.' No such thing; he is not quite six, and he has a lame leg, for which he was a year at Bath, and has acquired the perfect English accent, which he has not lost since he came, and he reads like a Garrick. You will allow this an uncommon exotic."

Mrs. Cockburn, with her wise economy and simplicity, was by all her antecedents and proclivities an aristocrat. More than forty years a widow, she lived to see the dying out of the City

Guard and the Caddies, and the taking away of the Luckenbooths. She saw the Burgh Moor built upon for half a mile in the line of Princes Street. During that memorable period, the parlour in Castle Hill or in Crighton Street —with chairs worked in faded tent-stitch, Queen Anne's china, and tabby cat—beheld the cream of Edinburgh society for two generations: not only the *élite* of rank, but of what Lord Kelly, in his vile pun, called the "eaterati." Among Mrs. Cockburn's constant visitors were Mrs. Murray Keith (old Lord Balcarres' Dr. Anne Keith, and Sir Walter Scott's Mrs. Bethune Baliol), the Dowager Countess Anne of Balcarres, with her famous daughter, Lady Anne Lindsay, Mackenzie, Robertson, Hume, and Home, down to young Walter Scott, and very possibly his lively friends—brother advocates and volunteers—Kirkpatrick Sharp, Erskine, and Cranstoun, with their piquante and friendly sisters, Mary Anne Erskine, afterwards Mrs. Campbell Colquhoun of Clathick, and Jane Anne Cranstoun, Basil Hall's Countess of Purgstall.

In the winter of 1756, six or seven years before

the date of the earliest of those letters of hers which have been recovered, Mrs. Cockburn was no doubt an eager and interested supporter of the tragedy written by the Scotch minister, acted in an Edinburgh theatre for many nights, and attended by a portion of his clerical brethren; and it is more than probable she was interested in the contests which arose in consequence of it in the Kirk Courts. Doubtless Mrs. Cockburn shared the zeal of Mrs. Betty Fletcher, daughter of Lord Milton of Brunstane, who, by her interest with my lord her father, and with Archibald, Duke of Argyll, helped to prevent John Home of Athelstaneford and "Jupiter" Carlyle of Inveresk, his friend, from being expelled from the Kirk as two of its most degenerate sons.

In the autumn of 1773, in the course of her hail of notes to Mr. Chalmers, although not noticed in them, Alison Cockburn had the best chance of paying her duty to the mighty bear and lexicographer who arrived on the 14th of the previous August at the White Horse Inn, and took the famous night walk up

the unsavoury High Street, arm-in-arm with Mr. Boswell, to Mr. Boswell's house in James's Court. Neither would she have got a rebuff for her pains, because the great, good, uncivil Tory Doctor kept a soft spot in his heart for a fine woman of quality. Among the illustrious seven houses which the proud biographer carefully reckoned up as those that Dr. Johnson honoured with his company at dinner were the houses of Sir Alexander Dick and Lady Colville — an Erskine of Kelly, and an old, intimate neighbour of the Balcarres family. At one or other of these dinners Lady Anne Lindsay made the acquaintance of Dr. Johnson, and so in all likelihood did Mrs. Cockburn.

As years waned, Alison Cockburn tied a lace hood over her undimmed auburn toupee, wrapped a shawl round her shoulders, with their puffed-out Queen Bess sleeves, and exchanged her fan for her snuff-box—very probably with her son Adam's portrait inside the lid ; but her cheery gift of humour flourished unabated. No calamity could permanently crush, still less sour her. Sir Walter Scott knew her in her

great age, and he spoke of her mental power and spirit as something almost miraculous. He makes special mention of her *petits soupers* in Crighton Street, where wit and genius met their match, and thought themselves well entertained by—

"Three nothings on three plates of delf,"

according to the hostess's apt quotation, when the nothings were seasoned with the charm of her manner and conversation.

Incidentally, Sir Walter, while writing to Lady Anne Barnard, recalls the ludicrous traits of a common friend—Suff Johnstone—and gives a specimen of the freedom as well as the grace of these old social gatherings.

One evening all the set were at Mrs. Cockburn's in Crighton Street, and with the Scotts and the Lindsays was their eccentric ally, Miss Suff, who, before women's rights were mooted, took the law into her own hand, and wore a man's great-coat, hat, and square-buckled shoes; practising, along with the habiliments, a man's habit of striding, spitting, and swearing. She shod a horse better than a smith,

played on a fiddle, and sang a man's song in a man's bass voice.

Gentle young Anne Scott's feet happening to tread upon the space appropriated by the Amazon, Anne was punished by a rough kick on the shins, and the fierce challenge, "What are ye wab-wabstering there for?" The innocent offender was overwhelmed, and the rest of the party electrified.

Both Sir Walter and Lady Anne bear emphatic testimony to Mrs. Cockburn's goodness; and her letters speak for themselves. She had truth, generosity, and tenderness, without which no very great personal influence can ever be attained; qualities which shed radiance over the corresponding reign of two still better known leaders of society—Mrs. Delany and Madame de Sévigné.

As a consequence of the old game of writing characters, we have two characters of Mrs. Cockburn—the one written by herself, the other a merrily impudent parody upon the first, written by her friend, Andrew Pringle of Haining, Lord Alemoor. These characters are not very

reliable sources of information, as the writer is only half in earnest, and writes chiefly for the purpose of displaying ingenuity in fitting into each other a bundle of paradoxes.

According to the lady's character of herself, she is a sentimental, high-flown woman, not so much unreasonable as impulsive, with an idle susceptibility to pity, but with no abiding sense of her obligations to her neighbours. She is haughty, but not sensitive; sufficiently ashamed of herself to tempt her to be a hypocrite; while at the same time she is an incorrigible, although not a hardened, sinner. The sentence which follows, and which is the last, appears fabricated in order to play with fire—and David Hume—in the approved fashion of the wittily irreverent beaux and belles of the eighteenth century. It introduces the great argument of the day, and, by an epigrammatic contrast, pits the authority of a cynically honest and philosophic history against the inspiration of the Bible, in which Mrs. Cockburn was a sincere believer. The character winds up with the sufficiently gloomy moral reflection, "If I am

never to be better and happier than I am, I had better never have been born."

Andrew Pringle, the best speaker at the Scotch bar in his day, in a mockingly mischievous travesty of Alison Cockburn's words, reverses the original. He prefers contrary charges of inconstancy, arrogance, self-conceit, hard-heartedness, caprice, wilfulness, contumaciousness, and deceit. He follows her lead in lugging in the Bible and David Hume, but gives as an explanation of her conduct that Alison Cockburn will not renounce her errors, and yet will not consent to scepticism, "as I can neither be better nor happier than I am." Without the key which Mrs. Cockburn's letters supply to the close connection and cordial intimacy between the couple, it might have been possible to attribute any amount of malice to Lord Alemoor in this sarcasm, in place of the privileged impertinence of one who was well-nigh a brother.

Alison Cockburn died in her house in Crighton Street, on the 22nd of November, 1794, aged eighty-two. She had survived her young lover,

John Aikman, sixty-three years, her husband forty-one years, and her son fourteen years. It is pleasant to think that she had still her grand-nephew and niece, Mark and Anne Pringle, her Browny and his daughters, with Miss Violy, Lord Alemoor's sister, to watch by her death-bed and close her eyes. In her will, made several years before her death, she disposed of the bulk of her property, which was not much more than three thousand pounds, dividing it chiefly between her niece Simpson and her niece Anne Pringle, who should have been her daughter. She left many friendly little bequests, and in expressing her wishes she alluded more than once to her son. She desired locks of her hair to be enclosed in two rings for her "earliest and most constant and affectionate friends, Mrs. Keith of Ravelston, and her brother, William Swinton" (the latter of whom had predeceased Mrs. Cockburn); and she did not forget her cat. She gave directions for her funeral, and referred to her epitaph, which she seems to have written, as she did her character, but it has not been preserved. She was buried beside her son—the

tombstone over the grave bearing no other inscription than their names and the dates of their death.

Old ladies yet living remember those who knew and loved the last remnants of Mrs. Cockburn's circle. "Old Auntie Violy," as they called her, dwelt at Haining with her nephew and niece, who were also Mrs. Cockburn's grand-nephew and niece; and Auntie Violy never grew old in mind, though she lived to be nearly a hundred in years. She was always anxious for her nephew the laird to marry, had troops of young ladies at Haining for the purpose of providing him with a wife, and among them Anne Chalmers. Mrs. Cockburn's "sweet Anne Page" at last captivated "Don Mark." Their daughter could well remember her aunt Anne Pringle, who in her beauty and goodness had won and refused many an excellent offer, and lived and died unmarried for Adam Cockburn's sake. An old crooked tree stood at the back of the house of Fairnalee; and the third generation were wont to point to it and say Anne Pringle cared more for that old tree than for all the

woods of Fairnalee—it was believed because she had sat under its shelter "on the bonnie summer nights" with Adam Cockburn. Perhaps this was the "naked oak" where Alison Rutherfurd had often met John Aikman, and of which Mrs. Cockburn wrote in one of her letters.

Alison Cockburn's gifts were eminently social, and bore a very considerable resemblance to those of Mary Pendarvis, belonging as the women did to the same era. The Edinburgh lady also was great in toasts, sentiments, and improvised verses. On occasions she, too, might have performed the curious feat of singing "A blackbird sat on a pear-tree," with sips of water between the words and the notes of the chorus. Mrs. Cockburn's song on the household at Balcarres is a succession of toasts in verse, supposed to have been composed on the spur of the moment. But a much happier instance of her wit is her satirical song on the rejection of her brother's hand by a fantastic lady of fashion—a parody on "Nancy's to the greenwood gane:"—

"Nancy's to the assembly gone
To hear the fops a-chattering;
And Willie he has followed her,
To win her love by flattering.
* * * *
"Wad ye hae bonnie Nancy?
Na, I'll hae ane was learned to fence,
An' that can please my fancy,
Ane that can flatter, bow, and dance,
An' mak' love to the ladies;
That kens how folk behave in France,
An's bauld among the caddies."

Can the reader not call up heartless Nancy, mincing in her high-heeled shoes and her *négligé*; the husband of her choice in his coat without a neck, and "his own hair;" for to appear in it was deemed "vastly" more conceited at that particular epoch than to figure in any form of wig?

Alison Cockburn's "I've seen the smiling," although not equal to "I've heard them lilting," is deservedly a national song. To borrow the use of an obsolete word, it is elegantly melodious in its woe, passion, and despair. There may be a degree of pomp in the rendering of the woe, the passion and the despair may be slightly elaborated and artificial after the manner of the

day, but they are woe, passion, and despair nevertheless. In

"I've seen the smiling
Of fortune beguiling,"

sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.

"But now 'tis fled—fled far away,"

is the moaning reiteration of every stripped and bereft Job.

"I've seen Tweed's sillar streams,
Glittering in the sunny beams,
Grow drumly and dark as they row'd on their way,"

is a fine local figure.

THE FLOWERS OF THE FOREST.

I'VE seen the smiling
Of fortune beguiling;
I've felt all its favours, and found its decay:
Sweet was its blessing,
Kind its caressing;
But now 'tis fled—fled far away.

I've seen the forest
Adorned the foremost
With flowers of the fairest, most pleasant and gay;

Sae bonnie was their blooming!
Their scent the air perfuming!
But now they are wither'd and a' wede away.

I've seen the morning
With gold the hills adorning,
And loud tempest storming before the mid-day.
I've seen Tweed's sillar streams,
Glittering in the sunny beams,
Grow drumly and dark as they row'd on their way.

O fickle Fortune!
Why this cruel sporting?
Oh, why still perplex us, poor sons of a day?
Nae mair your smiles can cheer me,
Nae mair your frowns can fear me;
For the Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

MISS JEAN ELLIOT.

1727—1805.

IN another nook of the pastoral Lowlands, where the Cheviots are the softer sentinels beginning to rise on the horizon, Minto House, the seat of the chief of the Elliots, has long looked down on "bonnie Teviotdale." Behind the house are two heathery hills, which may have remained much the same as they were a hundred years ago; but the nearest of the beautiful glens, which are now included in the pleasure-grounds, presented at that time no carefully-studied landscape gardening. Romantic as they are now, under the combined forces of art and nature, they were still more romantic in their original wildness of wood and water. The Minto craigs, at present shrouded in masses of wood, were at that time only clothed with broom and long grass.

Among other pleasant pictures of former days, there is a graphic picture of old Minto drawn by the present Countess of Minto:*—

"But the Minto of those days was not the Minto of these. The sheet of water, which now reflects laburnums and rhododendrons in sight of the windows, was then a narrow burn running under banks shaggy with thorns. Where the flower-garden is now, there stood a dismal little church in a corner, dark with yews, and dreary with unkept graves. The manse, surrounded by a few untidy cottages, overlooked the little glen, and was near enough to the house for the minister to see the family as they sat at dinner in the round room on the ground-floor, known as 'the big room' by uncles and aunts, and as the schoolroom by the children of to-day. The rocks may have been finer than when no wood hung like drapery on their sides, but from the old castle one must have looked down on muirs and heaths, where now lie the woods of the Lamblairs, or the green slopes and corn-fields which smile in pleasant Teviotdale."

* "Memoir of the Right Honourable Hugh Elliot."

"The green hills are possibly the only feature in the place which remain unchanged, though the village which clusters at their feet is new." On sunny days there were "bright stretches of whins and heather, which have disappeared now."

In 1727, Jean, the second daughter of Sir Gilbert Elliot of Minto, was born at Minto House. She was one of a family of sons and daughters; and, while the younger Gilbert was yet at home, before John went to sea, and Andrew to America, "the big room" must have been a blithe rendezvous of brothers and sisters —all the blither for those of them who were too reserved to take kindly to strangers.

The Elliots of Minto, like the Cockburns, gave great lawyers to the bar, and, like the Dalrymples and the Murrays, they lent statesmen to the Houses of Parliament. The Elliots, too, like the Lindsays, had a strong hereditary literary bent. Sir Gilbert, Jean's father, along with Duncan Forbes of Culloden, was at the expense of publishing, in a small folio tract, what he believed to be the ancient ballad of Hardyknute,

which had been recovered from bits of paper on which clews of thread had been wound. These had been found by the research and the pains of Lady Wardlaw of Pitreavie, when she had leisure to make and follow out the discovery (that is, the invention) as young Elizabeth Halket, of Pitferrane.

Another Sir Gilbert, the Lord Justice's son, and the brother of Jean, was the author of a pastoral song in the style of Shenstone which was much admired in its time. It begins—

> "My sheep I neglected, I broke my sheep-hook,
> And all the gay haunts of my youth I forsook,"

and might have awakened the echoes of the Leasowes. So high was his reputation for judgment and taste, as well as for the purity of his English, that both Home's *Douglas* and Robertson's "Charles the Fifth" were submitted to him in MS. for his opinion and corrections. Dr. Somerville, when Sir Gilbert's parish minister (occupying that manse whose tenant could see the Minto family as they sat at dinner), was introduced at the house to

David Hume and Mrs. Montagu, Dr. Gregory and Lord Kaimes.

Jean Elliot was well educated, and it has been remembered that she was fond of French literature, while she lived long enough to express a characteristic detestation of the license and the riot of revolutionary France. There is no lingering testimony to her beauty in the family traditions; but the slight particulars of her personal appearance which are handed down are in admirable accordance with what little traits are preserved of her character and disposition. She had "a sensible face, and a slender, well-shaped figure." It is also said that she was nice in all that related to cleanliness and neatness (a distinction in her day); and that, with the delicate moderation and maidenly shyness which belonged to her, she was scrupulous, even in advanced life, in accommodating her dress to the changes of fashion, so as not to be conspicuously peculiar, like many other old ladies. A family miniature represents her, in advanced years apparently, a little delicate old woman in close cap, ruffle, and ample

snowy neckerchief. She has the large nose and mouth which belong to an expressive rather than a beautiful face; but the mouth is kindly in its sagacity. Her eyebrows are well arched, and her eyes look lively under her sober head-dress.

Jean Elliot, from her youth, was remarkable for her discrimination, discretion, and self-control. One story tells that while yet a girl her father employed her to read his law papers, and with fatherly pride set store upon her comments. Another account relates that when Jean was a young woman of nineteen, in the year of the '45, a party of Jacobites came to Minto House in order to arrest that influential and dangerous Whig, Sir Gilbert. He had not received warning in time to convey himself farther than the Craigs, with their wide view and ruined watch-tower—one of the Scotch castles which bear the odd, incomprehensible name of Fat Lips. There he lay lurking among the broom and the fragments of rock, which had served as a refuge for nobler game than conies before then. Down at the house, in the commotion

and excitement of the trying moment, Jean either put herself forward to receive and entertain the unwelcome company, or else she was thrust into this difficult position by the other women, for she was neither house-dame nor eldest daughter. But she did it so well, with such simple courtesy and composure, that the enemy retired, under the impression that Sir Gilbert could not be within reach when the young lady, his daughter, was able to behave with perfect calmness and propriety.

Like her nieces in the next generation, Jean, as a girl, must have danced to the music of the bagpipes. She is certain also to have attended the Kelso races, which formed the gala of the year to Roxburgh, the Merse, the Forest, and Tweeddale. "The Northumberlands and the Delavals from the south side" here at last met "the Buccleuchs, Douglases, Kers, and Elliots," from the north side of the Border, in peace; many of the men being accustomed to spend the three nights "dancing on tables and climbing up walls." In her youth Jean Elliot must often have sat or strolled upon the Nut-

bank, Rubersiaw, the Dunion, rambled down the Deneholm Dene, and climbed among the Minto craigs to Fat Lips Castle. Lighter moments these than those when her father, the grave Lord Justice, made it his refuge. And as both the castles of Fat Lips—that on Tinto as well as that on Minto—had their peculiar usage, that when visited by ladies and gentlemen in company, each gentleman was entitled to salute one lady on passing beneath the gateway, we may believe that Jean did not always escape this penalty—or privilege.

Jean grew up a quiet, reserved woman. She had no disposition to show her wit, and no taste for display. She had few temptations to swerve from a strict avoidance of exaggeration and extravagance in word or action. Though she was a greater aristocrat than Alison Cockburn, *noblesse oblige* took with her a nobler form than the necessity to shine. Deep down beneath this aristocratic element, and beneath all her constitutional reserve, was a sympathetic heart beating fervently in tune with the joys and the sorrows of humanity—sacred by reason of their com-

monness. To those who carefully study character, such a type is not so puzzling as it may seem at first. Still waters run deep; and it is where the channels are so contracted as to be hidden altogether that the concentration takes place which causes the waters to burst forth and carry all before them. It was the delicate, retiring daughter of a country clergyman who wrote the most genuinely passionate novel of her generation.

As the narrative runs, it was in 1756, the year when Lord Chatham, as William Pitt, first took office—the year when Admiral Byng was executed, and Frederick the Great and Maria Theresa entered on the Seven Years' War—that Miss Jean Elliot, "riding home after nightfall" in the family coach with her brother, Mr. Gilbert, had a certain conversation with him on the battle of Flodden, which had been so fatal to the men of the Forest, that the much later battle of Philiphaugh—fought actually within the Forest's bounds—had been comparatively forgotten.

The men of the town of Selkirk who an-

swered the call to Flodden were a hundred in number. The martial eye of King James was so delighted with these stalwart burghers that, previous to the battle, he knighted the town clerk, who led his fellow-townsmen. The burghers of Selkirk are still in possession of a banner—a veritable English banner of green silk, with armorial bearings—which was taken from a doughty English captain by a Selkirk man named Fletcher, and brought home, although not in triumph, by its captor. Surviving the fatal battle, as well as the scouring of the country by the English afterwards, this Fletcher presented his trophy to his own corporation of weavers, and in their keeping it has remained, flourishing periodically in the Selkirk ceremony of "the Riding of the Common." A sadder memorial of Flodden is said to exist in the arms of the county town of this portion of the Forest. The representation of a woman and child, to be seen there, is supposed to refer to a legend that the corpse of a woman, wife to one of the hundred, was found, with a living child at her breast, lying by

the Ladywood Edge, when the remnant of the expedition returned, stricken and sorrowful, from the lost battle.

When Mr. Gilbert Elliot and his sister held that memorable conversation, she was a thoughtful woman, past the period of youth when the heart is engrossed by its own hopes and fears —its own sweetness and bitterness. She was twenty-eight years of age.

Speech had sunk into silence, Gilbert, manlike, had chosen to relieve the sober philanthropy and antiquarianism, the romantic dreariness, as one may say, of the topic, by giving it a sudden practical turn. He laid a wager of a pair of gloves or a set of ribbons that his sister Jean could not write a ballad on Flodden.

Now Mr. Gilbert was a song-writer himself, and a song-writer of no "small graith;" and his sister Jean, although she might demur at admitting, even to her own brother, that she was a writer, was a sympathetic woman and a genius.

Yielding to the influence of the moment, Jean accepted the challenge. Leaning back in her corner, with all the most mournful stories of

the country-side for her inspiration, and two lines of an old ballad, which had often rung in her ears and trembled on her lips, for a foundation, she planned and constructed the rude framework of her "Flowers of the Forest." Afterwards the song was duly and correctly written down.

Having thus fulfilled the terms and won the wager, Jean Elliot went on the even tenor of her way, and took no further trouble in the matter, beyond doing her best to keep her family and friends silent, as she was herself, on the subject of her authorship.

The example of Lady Wardlaw of Pitreavie, who, with that ingenious tale of hers regarding the clews of thread, had imposed on two great lawyers, might serve as a model of secrecy. But, with an instinctively loyal and grateful recognition of what she had been able to do, Jean Elliot did not think of suppressing her work or limiting its circulation. As an old ballad recovered and revived, the song speedily got into print, and spread far and near like a flash of lightning.

In 1760 there was more to think of and to be proud of in the estimation of the family at Minto than the singing of a song, old or new.

While the heir, Mr. Gilbert, ambitious and industrious, was making a figure in the House of Commons, Captain John greatly distinguished himself by the capture of "the pigmy fleet" of M. Thurot. In command of three privateers, Thurot had made previous descents on the coasts of Scotland and England, and burnt two English ships. Captain Elliot came up with him in the Channel, and, with half the number of the Frenchman's crew, boarded the French vessel. In the fight which followed, Thurot was killed. The three privateers were taken, and towed by their captor to the Isle of Man.

Even Horace Walpole, more given to chronicle scandal than to credit excess of merit in any line, takes note not only of the gallantry, but of the modesty of John Elliot.

One of the French cannon thus taken was brought to Minto. The old Lord Justice received and preserved a letter from his bailiff, in which the servant expresses the pride of

every man and woman of the clan that had been wont to spring up in ready response to the old stirring challenge—

"My name is little Jock Elliot,
An' wha daur meddle with me?"

in the fact of the Lord Justice's having two such promising sons. And the name of a third might have been added. Andrew Elliot had crossed the Atlantic, had made a fortune, and was preparing to settle on a fine place near New York whilst it was still the capital of an English colony. He married twice there (his second wife having been an old flame of George Washington's), and had several daughters born to him. In the general rejoicings at Minto, when bonfires surely blazed on the Dunion and Ruberslaw, and Thurot's cannon, planted on such a smooth green site as that of Mount Teviot, fired a volley in honour of John Elliot, it seemed a very simple and natural arrangement that one of the happy sisters of the hero, sharing in full her brother's modesty, should slip out of sight in her individual achievement.

Old Sir Gilbert, Jean's father, died not long

afterwards. His daughter-in-law has preserved some of the circumstances of his death by quoting the lines which her husband had written on the melancholy occasion, as being curiously applicable to the details of his own death, some twelve or fourteen years later:—

> "His mind refined and strong, no sense impaired,
> Nor feeling of humanity, nor taste
> Of social life, so e'en his latest hour
> In sweet domestic cheerfulness was passed;
> Sublimely calm his ripened spirit fled,
> His family surrounding and his friends;
> A wife and daughter closed his eyes; on them
> Was turned his latest gaze; and o'er his grave—
> Their father's grave—his sons the green turf spread."

When young Sir Gilbert (leaving "the affairs of the State") ruled in his turn at Minto, Jean went with her mother and family to Edinburgh. She lived for a number of years, leading the same quiet home life as she had led at Minto. She was no queen of society, and was far outshone in social qualities by Alison Cockburn. But her power made its impression in her own circle. Regarding the two ladies of the Forest in the light of authoresses, indeed, posterity has

somewhat reversed the judgment of their own contemporaries.

The Edinburgh to which Jean Elliot went had already lost much of its old feudal romance, but it was still very different from the Edinburgh of to-day. The North Bridge was just built; the South Bridge was not begun. The district including Crighton Street, where Mrs. Cockburn latterly lived, and George's Square, where Sir Walter Scott was born, was still lying in fields and orchards. The Mound was not begun. Two stage-coaches ran to Leith every hour, and one to London once a month. Lord Kaimes and Dr. Robertson represented the resident literati. No such thing as an umbrella had been seen in the streets. Vegetables were brought chiefly from Musselburgh by women who carried them in *creels* on their backs. In a dearth of fruit for dessert at the dinner-tables of the principal men in Edinburgh, an English traveller remarked that dishes of small raw turnips—called "neeps" by the natives—were eaten with avidity. Two o'clock was the universal dinner-hour, and tradesmen often

shut their shops from one till two. Gentlemen were in the habit of visiting ladies in their drawing-rooms to enjoy their society, and drink "dishes" of tea, in the afternoons. There was one dancing assembly-room, where minuets and country dances were danced in a succession of sets before the Lady Directress. The company met at five o'clock; the dancing began at six and ended at eleven by public orders, which were never transgressed. In the old theatre, which was decorated with painted heads of the poets and with Runciman's landscapes, Mr. Digges, the lessee, was his own great tragedian and comedian alike, being equally great in Cato and Sir John Brute.

Miss Jean's brother and his family made their head-quarters in London or near it. They did not settle long anywhere, and lived little at Minto. Lady Elliot Murray, brilliant, demonstrative, and vehement as she shows herself in the pages of her descendant, could have had little sympathy with her sister-in-law. Those of her children who were least like their mother, and were least her favourites in the beginning,

came nearest to their aunt Jean. Calm, grave Gilbert and unaffected Eleanor must have been Miss Jean's pets, and not the mother's idols, the impulsive diplomatist Hugh, and the dissatisfied beauty Isabella.

In 1766 the two boys, the elder nephews, returned from Paris, where they had resided with their tutor, Mr. Liston, and under the protection of David Hume, who comes out in these letters as a friendly, travelled old bachelor. The young Elliots were this year domiciled in Edinburgh, renewing their studies, preserving their Parisian perfection in fencing and dancing, and dining on a Sunday with their grandmother and aunts. If any one was likely to feel secret leniency towards steady Gilbert in that slightest of scrapes, when he was tempted by a young lady to take to Thomson's "Seasons" instead of to Roman history, was it not his aunt Jean?

In 1772, Lady Elliot Murray, who had been at Minto in the autumn for the Kelso races, visited the Dowager Lady Elliot in Edinburgh. In one of her letters "of thirteen pages long" she thus

characteristically comments on a portion of the society:—

"The misses are, I am afraid, the most rotten part of the society. Envy and jealousy of their rivals have, I fear, a possession in their minds, especially the old part of the young ladies, who grow perfect beldames in that small society; but upon the whole," she adds, with a little relenting, "there are many worthy, agreeable, well-principled people, *if you get over the language, manners, and address, which are at first striking.*"

This opinion from a Forfar and Fife heiress is in itself decidedly striking. In opposition to Lady Elliot Murray's verdict, we have had proof, in Mrs. Cockburn's letters, that the set of women —Mrs. Chalmers, Tib Hall, Jenny Duff, Violy Pringle, not to speak of the eccentric Suff Johnstone—in which Mrs. Cockburn mingled at this very date, were clever and kind-hearted. We have also an impartial witness in an English traveller who, writing from Edinburgh in 1777, praises the superior conversational powers of the women, and dwells on the pleasant effect

produced on a stranger by their easy, cordial address, and their manner of saying, in the earlier stages of acquaintance, "My dear sir," and "My good friend."

In 1773 Jean Elliot's mother died. 1776-7-8 were years of trouble and change to her remaining kindred. Eleanor Elliot, the younger niece, married Mr. Eden. Gilbert, the future head of the house, married a lady of French Huguenot extraction, who, to the comical disgust of his mother, added to that disadvantage the absence of personal beauty. Lady Elliot Murray described a similar choice on the part of another eccentric victim as "a mad marriage to a frightful, long-nosed, awkward woman, *who has nevertheless douceur, virtue, and amiability to recommend her, and a love to him as strong as it is romantic;*" and she consistently bemoaned her son's "unnatural passion for an ugly woman." She had soon graver subjects of lamentation. Sir Gilbert Elliot caught cold, fell into a rapid decline, went abroad, and died in 1777. His youngest son, the "Alick" of the family letters, died in India in 1778; and in the same year

young Mrs. Eden was forced to leave her baby with her mother, and accompany her husband to America. She went out, in her uncle Captain John's ship, at the time that the discontent of the colonists was about to break out in the American war. A nation's independence was secured by it; but many a fine fortune was scattered to the winds, many a fine place was ruined, and among others Andrew Elliot's. Spent by her trials, by anxiety for Hugh's prosperity in foreign courts, and by disappointment in Isabella's wasted life, Lady Elliot Murray died in 1779. Her sister-in-law, Miss Jean, was then a maiden lady of fifty-one years of age.

But the good fortune of the Elliots of that generation had not deserted them. True-hearted Gilbert was the stay of the mother, who came to know him at last, as well as of his entire family; and the genuine goodness of his French wife, who conceived at first sight a strong attachment for her husband's country home of Minto, and who danced with equal good-will at the Jedburgh ball and among the colliers of Lochgelly, overcame all hostility and

gained every heart. Mrs. Eden's husband also secured for her much happiness, at the same time that he won for himself the public honours which founded the barony of Auckland. Among the Edens the Christian name of Eleanor (the niece of the author of "The Flowers of the Forest"), no less than the literary bent of the Elliot family, may yet be found. Even Andrew Elliot flourished again in his daughters, the American nieces of Miss Jean, who married amidst the hearty congratulations of their kindred. The first (when New York was still held by the English) married Lord Cathcart; a second married Sir David Carnegie of Southesk (thus connecting the Elliots twice in that generation with the Balcarres Lindsays); and a third—the eldest — at a time when her waning attractions seemed to have filled her friends with a reasonable doubt of her "settling" at all, married her uncle John's gallant naval contemporary, Admiral Digby.

But successes which must have come more home to the spinster sisters in Edinburgh were

the fresh laurels gathered by their brave brother John. In 1778 he was a commodore, and second in command to Lord Howe. John Elliot distinguished himself in Rodney's victory off St. Vincent in 1780, and again in Admiral Kempenfelt's battle with the French fleet off Brest in 1781. In this latter action, John Elliot's ship, the *Edgar*, which was the leading ship in position, was shot at for half an hour by the *Triomphant*, a three-decker. At last the *Edgar* by a manœuvre avoided being raked by the *Triomphant*, receiving a broadside on its bows, while it poured a broadside in return, and disabled the *Triomphant*. The Elliots, like the Keppels, have an hereditary right to be sailors.

Miss Jean occupied a house in Brown Square when death had left her a solitary householder. The circumstances of her position were very much like those which surrounded Mrs. Cockburn. But Miss Jean craved retirement and quietness, and eschewed the gayer scenes of Edinburgh. The ridottos which the Scotch clergy permitted, though they set their faces

against masquerades, were not patronised by her; nor the whimsical oyster cellars, where the leaders of fashion in the northern capital imitated the grand dames of Paris in pretending to the license of men—a comparatively innocent license in this instance, however adverse it might have been to feminine delicacy. Certain it is, however, that Miss Jean would take her drive with a friend in her coach, backwards and forwards, on Leith or Edinburgh sands. It is not improbable that the authors of both sets of "The Flowers of the Forest" went and heard the lectures on elocution which were delivered by Richard Brinsley Sheridan's father, and which were attended by many of the first ladies and gentlemen in Edinburgh. Of a Sunday Miss Jean might sit, listening to the carefully-polished periods of Dr. Hugh Blair, in the High Kirk; or in old Greyfriars, trying to weigh the hard logic of Dr. Erskine. If Miss Jean sat in the latter kirk, then a noticeable little fellow formed, along with her, one of the congregation. In a seat crammed with eight or ten children at a time, besides father and

mother, was a little lame boy, who was yet to make Dr. Erskine preach, not to Guy Mannering and Councillor Pleydell alone, but to the civilised world. And when George Whitefield came down on his later visits to Scotland, after having broken with the seceders and come into favour with the established clergy, it is not at all unlikely that the representative of the Roxburgh Elliots, on the invitation of a Galloway Maxwell, Lady Glenorchy, was present at some of his marvellous preachings.

But through all varying scenes and fashions, the wise dislike to notoriety kept Jean Elliot safe from folly and censure. Discreet as she had been in the girl's open, flowing, big-flowered lutestring and gossamer "mob," in the '45, so was she in the old woman's tight "seeded" silk gown and close cap, in Brown Square in 1804; for she survived the moral and social earthquake of the French Revolution, the guillotining of the Bourbons, the going out of wigs and cocked-hats. She remained always on a well-bred, accommodating level with her generation. But there was a single departure from her practice.

She was the last woman in Edinburgh who, after the era of the fly, kept standing in her "lobby" a private sedan-chair, in which she was borne abroad by the last of the caddies when she wanted to take an airing or to make a call. Perhaps, at the last, she stood aghast at the enormous encroachments on old usages which had been compassed in her days.

Jean Elliot stole back in the end to the region of the Forest to see again its bracken, and hear once more its waters and the bleat of its sheep. She died either at Minto or at Mount Teviot, the house of her younger brother, Admiral Elliot (accounts differ), on the 29th of March, 1805, aged seventy-eight years.

"I've heard them lilting" was brought home, beyond mistake, to Jean Elliot's door, by Mr. Ramsay of Ochtertyre, Sir Walter Scott, and Dr. Somerville. And now who dare praise that "Flowers of the Forest?" It is simply beyond praise. Suffice it to say that the song is supposed to be sung by young girls, who are almost too young to have entered into the piteously familiar misery, and who have grown

a little weary under its crushing, never-lifted load; or else by very old women, who have waxed into mere spectatresses of the struggle of life, viewing it with the impatience of the old, whose eyes will soon be closed and whose ears will soon be dulled to all natural gladness, who think life too short for prolonged mourning. It is needless to point out the succession of perfectly contrasted and incomparably tender rural pictures.

THE FLOWERS OF THE FOREST.

I'VE heard them lilting at our yowe-milking,
Lasses a' lilting before the dawn o' day;
But now they are moaning on ilka green loaning—
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

At buchts, in the morning, nae blythe lads are scorning,
The lasses are lonely and dowie and wae;
Nae daffin', nae gabbin', but sighing and sabbing,
Ilk ane lifts her leglin, and hies her away.

In hairst, at the shearing, nae youths now are jeering,
The bandsters are lyart and runkled and gray;
At fair or at preaching, nae wooing, nae fleeching,—
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

At e'en, in the gloaming, nae swankies are roaming
'Bout stacks wi' the lasses at bogle to play;
But ilk ane sits drearie, lamenting her dearie,—
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

Dule and wae for the order sent our lads to the Border
The English, for ance, by guile wan the day;
The Flowers of the Forest, that foucht aye the foremost,
The prime o' our land, are cauld in the clay.

We'll hear nae mair lilting at the yowe-milking,
Women and bairns are heartless and wae;
Sighing and moaning on ilka green loaning—
The Flowers of the Forest are a' wede away.

MISS SUSANNA BLAMIRE.

1747—1794.

THE manor farm of Thackwood is situated in a district of Cumberland which is rich in many ways. The landscape is that of hill and dale, yellow corn-field, purple moor, and masses of magnificent green oaks and sycamores growing by the river Caldew. Helvellyn towers over all in uncorruptible majesty. From a height in a neighbouring parish, the Solway Frith and the Scotch hills are seen, as well as Crossfell, Patterdale, Skiddaw, and Carnack. It is a landscape literally studded with massive grey manor farm-houses, with rugged and lordly Border castles, and with the rich relics of abbeys, priories, and nunneries. The whole is crowned by the bishop's palace of Rose Castle, and the cathedral of the merry town of Carlisle.

The ground abounds in the foot-marks of different races, the brands of old struggles between rival nations long united, and half-forgotten feudal factions. Rude British forts are here, and Druidical circles, and rings which look like circles. Here, too, are Roman camps, with their tokens of disciplined skill and the imperial patience and labour of Roman walls. At Rose Castle, Edward the Hammer of the Scots held a Parliament. At Thorsby, which was a Danish colony named after their Thunder God, David, the sore saint for the crown of Scotland, strove, by building a Christian church, to bury out of sight Thorsby's heathen foundation. Howards, Grahams, Dacres, and Musgraves rode in this quarter red-handed. They toppled down each other's battlemented towers, or lit the faggots beneath the oaken beams. The character of the people was wont to be as marked and varied, as bold and wild, as hard and tender, as their country. Nowhere else in "canny auld Cumberland" were there men of more original temper, more stubborn will, or shrewder sagacity and thought. But it was all welded with rough

bounty and hospitality. There was blue blood in yeomen's veins in these dales. Ancient lineage was not less proudly and jealously preserved that its holders were plain men who guided their ploughs with their own hands, and mingled freely with their hinds, not only at church and market, at sales and burials, but at more private feasts. Manners were deeply rutted in, and the tracks were long of being worn out in these remote and isolated fields. Order and law waxed grim in their integrity, or independence became license, and license brutality.

Not much of the license and brutality crossed the innocent maiden path of the robust dalesmen's pet, Miss Blamire. But the cordial freedom, the hearty kindness, the humorous "thrawnness," the deep tenderness often hid under the unhewn rock of the outer man, like the moss in the rough channels of their becks, entered into her very soul.

Susanna Blamire was a daughter of an ancient yeoman family of Cumberland, not the least distinguished or the least worthy of that stout

class. She was born at Cardew Hall (one of those square, absolutely hoary old farmsteads) in January, 1747, exactly twenty-three years before William Wordsworth. As yet the associations which have so intimately linked Cumberland and Westmoreland and their lakes with Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, Wilson, and De Quincey, had all to be formed. On the loss of her mother in early childhood, Susanna Blamire was adopted by an aunt. This was Aunt Simpson,—all the dale's Aunt Simpson,—a middle-aged widow with lands in her own right. She was a splendid specimen of the practical, sharp-witted, yet open-handed and loving-hearted daleswoman. By her Susanna was reared to womanhood. A tradition remains of her, that on her parlour table she kept three bowls standing with her ready money,—gold, silver, and copper,—to let her know how much she had to spend, and to enable her to relieve on the spot any daleswoman seeking her help. One may add that it was a remarkable proof of the honesty of her household, and of the discretion even of its youngest

people, when they could be deputed to meet the claims of Aunt Simpson's household, and trusted to supply their own wants in dress and pocket-money, out of these ever-ready bowls.

Little Sukey of Cumberland was also fortunate in another respect. She was not left alone with a childless and dogmatic aunt. Two brothers and a sister bore her company, having been transferred with herself to Thackwood on the occasion of her father's second marriage, and in deference to Aunt Simpson's plain-spoken prejudice against stepmothers.

The old house of Thackwood Nook is minutely described by Dr. Lonsdale in connection with William Blamire, Susanna's nephew, who, long after her death, flourished as one of the "worthies" of Cumberland. It is still a characteristic house, with its irregular out-buildings and its forest trees close at hand. It is low-browed in its two stories, with heavy mullioned windows, and a rough-cast, whitewashed front. The carriage-drive and lawn end in a weather-stained, flagged walk, which is edged with sweet musk, and bordered by grizzly yews and

gaunt thorns. Rising high above the rest, and shading the house far and wide, are one or two gnarled, lichen-grown oaks. Except the everlasting hills, not another material object save these oaks would have served to make the hoary farm-house of Thackwood look by comparison a modern dwelling.

Susanna and her brothers and sister walked in mud and mire a mile's distance to Raughton Head, where at a village school they were taught, with the rest of the dale, at the small fee of a shilling a quarter from each scholar.

If this was the school of which Susanna Blamire afterwards drew a picture at the dinner hour, when the children from a distance were unfolding their wooden trenchers, with their Cumberland pies, oaten cakes, and tin flasks of milk, then it was a dame school, and the old scholar adds a pretty sketch of the learned school-dame :—

> "And now the dame in neat white mob is seen,
> Her russet gown, silk kerchief, apron clean;
> At the school door her tremulous voice is heard,
> And the blythe game's unwillingly deferred."

If the way from Thackwood to the school was rough for the children, it had enough of living interest in bank and beck to feed young hearts and brains. What with humble bees, dragon-flies, and trout, coral berries of the mountain ash, ruby haws, and blood-stones of brambles, there were treasures enough to tempt the truant. There was a bridge across the brawling stream, half hidden among woodbine and sweet-brier, where little feet loved to tarry, in order that their owners might swing on its railing and watch the foaming water. There was a mill which possessed inexhaustible attractions, with its friendly "clack," its dusty miller resting against one leaf of its wide door, its white sacks nearly toppling over, its chicks in the road, and its ducklings in the pond. There were lovely bits of romantic woodland, and hill-country scenes of beauty never to be forgotten, but to be remembered faithfully in night-watches on board ship, at a town desk, in a Highland home, or on a sick-bed; and songs of missel-thrush and ring-dove fit to tune the throat of incipient songstresses like themselves.

The studies at the village school were exceedingly circumscribed; but Susanna Blamire made the most of them—more, indeed, than is often made of a college curriculum. She was a diligent reader, wrote a fair round hand, and to these branches added painting and music. For the last she had such love and such taste, that she taught herself to play passing well on the guitar, which was then the sweet tinkling instrument of rustic belles, before the rattle of harpsichord and spinet was common in country places. She could charm herself and her neighbours by her music, an end not always attained by the elaborate and noisy musicians of the present day. But it was in the sister art of dancing that she most excelled. Miss Sukey was the ravishing dancer of the country-side. With her dancing was a passion, an inspiration, and it was engaged in, in the open air, among the warping grass and ling, by the dusty highway, and to the accompaniment of a travelling piper blowing on his pipes. She was as much filled and fired with the necessity of contributing to the general joy of the natural world as ever was gipsy

maiden in a Spanish market-place. And this is no fancy picture. It is told of her that on one occasion she leaped from the pony on which she was riding; and, letting it wander at will among the harebells, bade the chance piper play "a spring," and encouraged him by dancing in pure blitheness because the world was fair and she was young, and her sensitive ear and supple limbs had to offer their own donation to the beauty and excellence of existence. Happily for Miss Sukey, there was no excited crowd, no malicious gossip, no deadly hostile Prior to punish her in the deed. There was only the poor gratified piper, the phlegmatic shaggy pony, and perhaps a motherly cow raising her head while she continued to chew her cud in a neighbouring field, or a curious lambkin, accustomed also to dance, in season and out of season, peering over the ridge of the first boulder. Even had any of Sukey's countrymen and countrywomen chanced to spy her at that rash moment, there would have been no proud princess's degradation; it would only have been spoken of as a freak of the "bonnie

and varra lish lass" who was so much one of themselves.

Of the printed books which Susanna Blamire read, few could have lent help to her particular genius. Ballads were out of fashion; Dr. Percy and young Walter Scott had not yet revived them. But the retentive memories and unchanging habits of old Cumberland preserved traditions and legends manifold. Dwelling in the very places, and surrounded by the very people among whom the lively incidents of the old tales had happened, Susanna must have grown up in familiarity with "Hughie the Græme," "Kinmont Willie," and especially with "Carlisle Yetts." Only two years before she was born, the flames of the last unhappy rebellion were quenched in blood. Many persons in Cumberland must still have remembered the passage to and fro, under such widely different auspices, of Prince Charles's army of wild Highlanders and disaffected Lowlanders. Old women would tell the sympathetic girl the marvellous story of the traitor's head with long, soiled, yellow locks raised on a cruel pike, and of the

fond, miserable woman who came a great distance to gaze on it, at sunrise and at sunset. Such stories could not but have had their influence on the girl's plastic mind, notwithstanding that the true men and women of the dales were too canny and sagacious to go in largely for the Jacobites. Nor was that what we call a romantic age. There is, after all, little trace of the fascination of old romance on Susanna Blamire's mind, though romance was latent there. Her mind was simply receptive, crystal clear in its shallows, and calculated to reflect its own age truthfully and tenderly. The songs for which Cumberland is famous, and to which Susanna Blamire was to contribute her quota, were then beginning to be heard, and it may be credited that Susanna took more to the songs than to the ballads.

These songs in the vernacular are very peculiar and very graphic. They are shrewd, waggish, or woeful. They are full of strong individual character and high local colouring, and abound with allusions to rites, sports, and sayings which flourish in Cumberland, and in

Cumberland alone. They dwell emphatically on qualities which hardly reveal themselves in the natives of other districts of England. In these Cumberland songs there are to be found a vigorous independence on the part of the men and an arch coyness on the part of the women—above all, a *pawkiness* and a *gauciness*, to borrow two untranslatable Scotch words, which are generally held to abide on the Scotch side of the Border, and to be out of keeping with frank, dutiful English human nature. Withal, there are in these songs deep glistening wells of tenderness, and enduring rocks of constancy. The very titles of some of them convey a world of meaning. How expressive are these: "I trudged up to Lon'on through thick and through thin," "The Bridewain," "The Diel gae wi' them that fashes wi' me," "This love sae breaks a body's rest," "Croghie Watty," "Lal Dinah Greyson," "A Lockerbye Lick," and "The Village Gang!" In two lights these songs are like Mr. Barnes's Dorsetshire songs, but in two only. Their simplicity is so entire that it is very quaint, and the piteousness of the lamentation put into

the mouths of the one-idea'd sufferers is unsurpassable. There is no doubt that Susanna Blamire dearly loved that earlier strata of Cumberland songs, and learned much from them. But when she lived in the centre of Cumberland human nature, rich and characteristic to an extent that is difficult for her successors, even understanding the freedom of manners of the past century, to measure, she scarcely needed the songs.

The primitive yeoman gentry of Cumberland fearlessly visited high and low, ate at the tables of peasants as well as of nobles, and sat down at the lowliest hearth as well as in the lordliest chimney corner.

It is recorded of Miss Sukey, whose gaiety of heart was exuberant, that in all the dales there was not such a lass for attending "merry meets" and "upshots." At these entertainments the company were divided, by the rule of three, into drinkers (without apology), carders, and dancers. The dancers danced under the bare joists of the long loft which formed the upper story of many of the farm-

houses; the drinkers drank across the deal boards of the clay-floored kitchen; while the carders played cards in the bower, or principal sleeping-room of the family that gave the entertainment. Miss Sukey Blamire most enjoyed taking her part in the dance, whether it were "Cross the Buckle" or "Bonny Bell," choosing her partner from among the farm labourers and country servants, most of whom had been her school companions. She ate and drank of the bread and cheese and ale, which, with the "towering pies" and huge apple-tarts, were the potent heavy refreshments of the "merry meets." She strolled into the bower, and looked on at "Popps and Pairs," "Showart Trump," "Whisk," or "Auld ane-and-thirty." She raised her clear voice with the rest of the company in the chorus of the roaring ditties of "Tom Linton" and "Dick Waters." Cumberland ladies did so without losing a grain of their prestige, without contracting the shadow of a stain on their womanliness, and at a time when their backs were no sooner turned than the mirth was apt to grow riot, and the feasting

debauchery. Cumberland clownishness sometimes became irreverent barbarism, as when, in later days, Susanna Blamire's nephew William went to hear a sermon from a curate who was in disgrace with his bishop for intemperance, he found the priest officiating in clogs, and without stockings.

Susanna Blamire won golden opinions from a country-side for the restraining presence of her gracious geniality—so genial that when she died the impulsive protest burst from the lips of an old farmer of her acquaintance, "The merry meets will not be worth going to now, since she is no more."

In such company Susanna Blamire might well gather the substance of the stiff argument embodied in her political song, "Why, Ned, man, thou look'st so down-hearted;" and quick ears might catch the first vixenish mutterings of the storm which she and her friend, Miss Gilpin, afterwards heard in its full fury, and worked up jointly in their grotesque "Cumberland Scold."

Susanna Blamire reached by keen observation what Lady Nairne arrived at instinctively.

As a result which might be looked for from the two processes, Lady Nairne's studies of ploughmen, fish-wives, and gude-wives have more of the large framework of common humanity, are more delicate and idealised; while Susanna Blamire's are narrower, and more literal.

It is a puzzle to decide when Susanna Blamire began to write. It is said, indeed, that her first effort dates as early as her nineteenth year. But at what times her different songs were written we have no proper means of judging, since none were published either during her own life or during the lives of her near relations. She did not put her name to any of those which did get into print through the columns of newspapers and in collections of songs, nor did she have any craving to win literary reputation, though neither had she Lady Nairne's morbid and excessive shrinking from being recognised as an authoress. But certainly Susanna Blamire's essays in writing were not the forced growth of her friends' favourable opinion and encouragement. Her elder brother,

the naval surgeon, was the hard-working member of a hard-working profession, which he practised for science and for charity's sake from the day that he left the navy, yet to such good purpose that Lord Vernon came down from London to Cumberland in order to avail himself of Dr. Blamire's skill. Dr. Blamire, thus brought into constant contact with the stern realities of life, had a good-humoured, but short-sighted, contempt for a poetess's visions, and for the frittering away of time in stringing together rhymes which appeared equally idle, whether bombastic or nonsensical. Yet this matter-of-fact surgeon and yeoman squire of the Hollows could be so inconsistent as to marry one of the most accomplished Cumberland spinsters, for whose gifts and superior cultivation his sister Sukey entertained a generously ardent admiration. In his bachelor days the doctor had patient indulgence with Susanna's irrepressible spirit and blitheness. He was wont to declare that all the young officers, his messmates of the quarter-deck and cockpit, were dull and phlegmatic compared with his sister

Sukey. Perhaps one reason for his forbearance was simply that he had no wish that the gay young sister should run off at a tangent as an erratic authoress. Nor did active Aunt Simpson give her niece any countenance in her favourite pursuit. Doubtless the old lady held that too much brains in a woman would spoil her prospects in marriage. But these were spoilt betimes in another way. In the recklessly indiscriminate visiting of Cumberland, Susanna, with her unique fascination, was so unfortunate as to take the fancy of the son of a noble house, whether while at Chillingham, where she resided for a short space with the family of the Earl of Tankerville and was made a pet of by the Earl, or in some other equally ineligible quarter, is not precisely known. But at all events, her fancy was taken in turn by the young nobleman who, with becoming surroundings, had enough manliness to value her as she deserved. It need not be said that the lover's family did not approve of his choice, and that he was induced by their representations to break off the connection.

Poor Sukey! After singing so modestly, so winningly,

"What ails this heart o' mine?"

to be compelled to sing and dance on in another and more bitter experience, a personal application of Grisell Baillie's plaintive, restive cry,—

"Werena my heart licht I wad dee!"

Poorer young nobleman! Having loved a woman neither very fair, nor rich, nor high-born, nor the fashion, he was tempted to give her up, remain a bachelor or become a Benedict to another Beatrice, with the consciousness that Susanna Blamire's qualities were simply such as he could never meet with again, and his passion what he could not hope to transfer to another by any spell of obedience or expediency. For Susanna Blamire might have written of herself, and of him who, in spite of his accidental advantages, ought to have been her bridegroom, what she wrote in her "Auld Robin Forbes," which Mary Russell Mitford, no mean judge of poetry, called "eminently successful:"—

"The lasses a' wondered what Willy could see
In yen that was dark and hard-featured like me;
And they wondered aye mair when they talk'd o' my wit,
And slily tell't Willy *that* couldna be it.
But Willy he laugh'd, and he made me his weyfe,
And wha was mair happy thro' a' his lang leyfe?
It's e'en my great comfort now Willy is gane,
That he often said nae place was leyke his ain heame.

* * * *

"He would fling me a daisy to put in my breast,
And I hammered my noddle to mak out a jest;
But merry or grave, Willy often would tell
There was neane o' the lave was leyke my ain sel'.
And he spak what he thought, for I'd hardly a plack
When we married, and nobbet ae gown to my back."

Judging from her portrait, and from descriptions which are extant of the person of Sukey Blamire (whose sister Sarah was one of the greatest beauties in Cumberland), we gather that she was slightly marked with small-pox, but not so much as to disfigure her features or mar her complexion. She had berry-brown hair, of which she professed to be very vain. She wore it thrown back from her high forehead, and hanging down on her shoulders in a long roll, formed of one thick curl, disposed with studied negligence somewhat in the style of the present

day. Her nose was large, and too *prononcé*, but her mouth was very sweet in its firmness, and her eyes and brows were fine. She was tall and slender, with a shapely neck, bust, and shoulders. Her dress (in the portrait) is a marvel of simple elegance. The body of the gown is cut square and low, with a full white edging round the bosom. A single rose is worn at one side.

Susanna Blamire's much-loved sister Sarah married, while yet young, a Scotch laird, Colonel Graham of Duchray and Ardoch; and Susanna went with the couple to stay in their house in Scotland. In her change of home she found only a change of friends and of beautiful landscape; for Colonel Graham's property was situated on Loch Ard, near Monteith and Aberfoyle, in that district of the middle Highlands of Stirling and Perthshire which is only second to the Trosachs in mingled wildness and softness. What Susanna knew of the gills, pikes, meres, and forces of her own lake-land was reproduced to her still more charmingly in Scotland; and Susanna loved Scotland. Like a

true woman of the North countrie, she had always had leanings to the land beyond the Border. She knew by heart Allan Ramsay's "Gentle Shepherd," and had put "Auld Robin Gray" into the mouth of a Cumberland milk-maid while it was yet fresh from Lady Anne Lindsay's closet at Balcarres. Susanna adopted Scotland and the Scotch with enthusiasm, and thenceforth wrote Scotch songs like a Scotchwoman. She was inspired to make the trial by the songs of Burns, then in his zenith, and of Tannahill in his weaver's home in Paisley. None could have relished these songs more than Susanna Blamire, with her Cumberland *furor* wherever song was concerned, and her own genius as a lyrist. The effect of these songs on her style is evident. But owing to her indifference to literary interests in themselves, and her remaining outside of every literary coterie in Edinburgh and elsewhere, she does not in any of her letters and poetical epistles even mention the name of Burns.

With the Grahams, Susanna took trips to Ireland and to London; and these trips were

pleasant interludes in her quiet, but bright life. Wherever she travelled, it was in the happy obscurity and irresponsibility which belonged to the part of Mrs. Graham's sister, the young lady in the little family party. Most likely her great objects of curiosity and enjoyment in London were those of any other country woman—St. Paul's, the parks, the palaces, Vauxhall, and the theatres. Her vivid apprehension of character, and her sympathy with dramatic truth, she has herself chronicled in her whimsical account of the wonders worked by a strolling company in her own village of Stockleworth:—

"Then down-the-brow Wully tuck up his coat lappet,
And held't till his een, for he's given to jeer;
But I had it frae yen that was even forment him,
'Twas weel for his sel' that his coat lappet was near.
Oh! *Venus Preserved* was the name o' the actin',
And Jaffer was him had the beautiful wife;
Tho' I gowl'd a' the tyme, it's a worry to tell on't,
I never was hawf sae well pleased in my life."

Mrs. Graham's husband died six years after their marriage. She had no family, and she seems to have returned with Susanna to Cumberland, where the two lived again with Aunt

Simpson at Thackwood until Aunt Simpson's death, twelve years later. The sisters then continued to reside at Thackwood in summer, and in Carlisle in winter.

Susanna, in her writings, gives occasional glimpses of the pleasantly monotonous life at Thackwood. In her lively doggerel she makes record for the benefit of absent friends :—

"At eight I rise—a decent time,
But Aunt would say 'tis oftener nine.
I come down-stairs, the cocoa's ready,
For you must know I've turned fine lady.

"When breakfast's done I take a walk,
Where English girls their secrets talk;
Often my circuit's round the garden,
In which there's no flower worth a farthing.

"I sit me down and work * awhile,
But here I think I see you smile:
'At work,' quoth you,—'but little's done,
'Thou lik'st too well a bit of fun.'

"At twelve I dress my head † so smart,
Were there a man he'd lose his heart;
My hair has turned the loveliest brown,
There's no such hair in London Town.

* The work was often spinning.

† Miss Sukey from her childhood would figure in a mob-cap of a morning.

"At one the cloth is constant laid
By little Fan, our pretty maid;
She's prettier much than her young lady,
But that you know full easily may be.

"After I've dined maybe I read,
Or write to favourites 'cross the Tweed,
Then work till tea, then walk again,
If it does neither snow nor rain.

"If e'er my spirits want a flow,
Up-stairs I run to my bureau,
And get your letters—read them over,
With all the fondness of a lover.

"But stop! my journal's nearly done,
Through the whole day 'tis almost run;
I think I'd sipped my tea nigh up—
O yes! I'm sure I drank my cup.

"I work till supper, after that
I play or sing, maybe we chat;
At ten we always go to bed,
And thus my life I've calmly led.

"Since my return, as Prior says,
In some of his satiric lays,
I eat and drink and sleep—what then?
I eat and drink and sleep again.
Thus idly lolls my time away,
And just does nothing all the day."

Aunt Simpson's housekeeping was very much that of Susanna's nephew William, who wa

a Cobbett among the country gentry, when he kept house at Thackwood Nook thirty or forty years later. He could plough, sow, and mow with his own hands. He rose and breakfasted early, dined with his men at noon on farmers' fare (he was especially fond of potato-pot, or a slice of boiled bacon), had his favourite dish of tea (out of a blue basin) at five in the afternoon, no supper, and early to bed.

There was one task which ladies in the country were in these days fain to set themselves, partly from natural vocation, partly to serve as an occupation and amusement when life threatened to grow too tedious. And this was a task which Susanna Blamire entered upon and sported, braving the derision of her brother, the doctor. Ladies Bountiful who now content themselves with distributing flannel, soup-tickets, and Tract Society volumes, did not hesitate then to take upon themselves the cure of bodies, and to prescribe for all the ills that flesh is heir to, drugging patients right and left. Miss Sukey shared the hankering after the practice of her brother's profession which is so strong in

many women. She was in the habit of recounting with great glee these medical exploits, while all the time she was not too proud to fall back upon her college-bred brother's learning and experience when her wonderful performances did not compass their end.

> "For you must know I'm famed for skill
> In the nice compound of a pill,"

she boasts on one occasion. On another she details with more prudent reserve :—

> "And now the sisters take their evening walk—
> One famed for goodness and one famed for joke,
> For physic too some little is renowned,
> With every salve that loves to heal the wound.
> The pulse she feels with true mysterious air,
> While Mrs. Graham of strengthening broths takes care;
> That sickness must be hopeless of all end
> Which her good home-made wine no way can mend.
> The brother then his skill of medicine tries,
> And rarely in his hands the patient dies."

This charming quack, who is a little inclined to flourish in the eyes of the world the fact that "she likes too well a bit of fun," and that she is "famed for joke," scorns to dwell on failing health and flagging spirits, unless when the

pressure is irresistible. Even then she does not make an unalloyed lamentation. Yet, apart from any special cause, there was a great strain of pensiveness in that merry soul. She would carry out her guitar to play plaintive airs, and compose verses in keeping with them, in the shaws dropping yellow in the fall, when the Caldew was sobbing and moaning over its stones. And with such a temperament she must often have started off of an evening in that finished toilette of "a dressed head," and with the other finishing touches to her dress of snowy clear muslin neckerchief and apron, to pace the flagged walk in the dusk of the oak-trees, and scent the faint, dying musk. When old Aunt Simpson was taking her nap, and Mrs. Graham was studying the recipe-book and the linen-press, sister Sukey must have snatched a moment's truce—

"To hear the wind blow, and to look at the moon."

These winter months in Carlisle, where the best society in the town was open to them, proved a cheerful change to the sisters. There Susanna Blamire met and entered into an affec-

tionate alliance with a kindred spirit, Miss Gilpin of Scaleby Castle, who belonged to another ancient Cumberland family, as fresh in its type, and with sons and daughters as gifted, as those in the family of the Blamires. These Gilpins claimed descent from Bernard Gilpin, the Apostle of the North, the gallant, homely country parson who, in the sixteenth century, wandered over hill and dale with his Bible in his hand, confronted his own time-serving bishop, and dealt an uncompromising rebuke to a fierce Borderer who had hung up a glove in a church, Border fashion, as a challenge to any man who dared to take it down. "I hear," thundered this Gilpin from his pulpit, "that one of you hath hanged up a glove even in this sacred place. See! I have taken it down, and who dare meddle with me?" In Susanna Blamire's generation, a Gilpin of Scaleby Castle had written "Forest Scenery," the best book on the subject in that day; whilst his brother, more than a fair artist, had etched the cattle figures for the book. A third brother, a doctor in the army, was knighted for his services, and was

in favour both with General Washington and with George III. Catherine Gilpin, their sister, and a daughter of the commandant who was compelled to surrender Carlisle Castle to Prince Charlie, was a lively and intelligent woman. She was herself a song-writer of decided talent. Witness her Trafalgar sea-fight, with its exulting beginning:—

"O lads! I'se fit to burst wi' news,
There's letters frae the fleet,
We've banged the French—ay, out and out,
And done the thing complete.

"There was sic shower o' shell grenades,
Bunched out wi' shot like grapes,
And bullets big as beath our heads,
Chained twa and twa wi' reapes."

Not less natural is the tender truth of the sailors' sorrow for Nelson:—

"'O wae's in me!' our Johnny says,
'That I suld hae to tell,
For not a man aboard the fleet
But wish'd t' had been his-sel'.'"

Still more admirable is Miss Gilpin's photograph of the village club and its hero:—

"O lozes o' me! we are merry,
I nobbet but wish ye could hèar,
Dick Spriggins he acts sae like players,
Ye niver heard naething sae queer.

"And first he comes in for King Richard,
And stamps wid his fit on the ground;
He wad part with his kingdom for horses,
O lozes o' me! what a sound.

"And then he comes in for young Roma,
And spreads out his beetle black fist,
I'se jist fit to drop whilst he's talking,
Ye niver seed yen sae distrest.

"O lozes o' me! it is moving,
I hates for to hear a man cry;
And then he luiks up at a window,
To see if lal Juliet be by.

"And then he lets wi't she's talking,
And speaks that ye hardly can hear,
But I think she cries out on Squire Roma,
And owther says Hinny or Dear.

"Then up wi' Dick Spriggins for ever!
May he leeve a' the days o' his life;
May his bairns be as honest as he's been,
And may he aye maister his wife."

The Blamires and Miss Gilpin lodged in the

same house in Carlisle, at 14, Finkle Street, near where the Caldew falls into the Eden.

The association of the two ladies was a source of great satisfaction to both. The cordial women worked, chatted, and wrote together—writing more than once conjointly their comic and pathetic songs. Together they visited Gilsland Spa, walking and riding in the picturesque dale where young Walter Scott, in after years, met and wooed Charlotte Carpenter. In the assembly-room at Gilsland, and at the hunt-ball in Carlisle, Susanna Blamire looked on with her friend at the dancing, in which Miss Sukey, in her own day, had been matchless.

Susanna's spirit through all her life was a flickering light in a fragile lamp. She had inherited from her mother a delicate constitution. Before she reached thirty she had been driven to perpetrate jests on her rheumatism and asthma. Several of her poetic pieces—really fugitive—have a passing reference to sickness, or to recovery from sickness, and are invocations to the health which would not come at her call,

although with a wistful remonstrance she reminds the unpropitious goddess Hygeia—

"'Tis not because I have not been
Amidst the nymphs and shepherds seen,
For as they frolick'd on the mead,
Gay bounding to the oaken reed,
This foot I ween as light could pass
As any yet that trod the grass."

Yet she is forced to write:—

"Nature's the same, the spring returns,
The leaf again adorns the tree;
How tasteless this to her who mourns,
To her who droops and fades like me!
No emblem for myself I find,
Save what some dying plant bestows,
Save where its drooping head I bind,
And mark how strong the likeness grows."

At the age of forty-seven Susanna Blamire's little vigour was spent, her day done. The dancer by the road-side, and during the holiday hours of "the merry meets," danced no more. The physician could not heal her own deadly wound. Miss Sukey, "the bonnie and varra lish" young lass of so many kindly memories, lay down resignedly on her bed in the house in

Finkle Street, and died in the faith of a Christian, and with a Christian's peace.

In her will Susanna had written an earnest request that, as she humbly trusted in the mercies of Almighty God that she should be received into everlasting happiness, so she trusted that her dear sister Graham would not suffer her grief to become excessive for the loss of one whose every hour she had been the means of rendering "easy, happy, and delightful."

At Miss Blamire's funeral between eighty and ninety country-people voluntarily presented themselves. In many cases they walked the distance of seven miles twice over, to carry Miss Sukey home from the house in Carlisle where she died to the Blamire burial-ground in the little churchyard at the village of Raughton Head, where she had tripped to school. This was not a small mark of respect paid to a single woman who had lived among them, though it represented but a tithe of the gallant attendance of hundreds of yeomen, who rode like an old Border following, to do honour to the triumph of Miss Sukey's popular nephew, "Willy Blamire."

He was first elected sheriff, and then one of the members for Cumberland. On the last occasion, during the ceremony of chairing him, he boasted that there was one thing that he could do better than his fellow-member, Sir James Graham of Netherby. This was to rise and bow many times in the course of his distinguished, but vibrating progress, since he had been to the manner born,—early accustomed to stand while driving his swaying corn-carts.

Susanna Blamire had no call to write for bread; neither was she induced to write by the representations of her neighbours. Nor was she a woman full of passionate life demanding utterance, though what she did write she wrote for her own satisfaction. Her few longer poems are pleasing trifles, never rising above mediocrity. They are most of them founded on domestic subjects, with purely personal, family, or friendly interests. There are elegies, marriage odes, individual remonstrances, and private reflections. But Susanna Blamire's songs are much more.

The joint songs of Susanna Blamire and

Catherine Gilpin which have been preserved are "The Cumberland Scold" and "The Sailor-lad's Return."

There is a song which has been attributed at different times to Susanna Blamire and to Lady Anne Lindsay. It appeared in more than one old-world magazine, but neither of the ladies to whom it was ascribed thought fit to claim it. The song is that of the "Carrier Pigeon," beginning—

"Why tarries my love,
Oh where does he rove?
My love is long absent from me.
Come hither, my dove,
I'll write to my love,
And send him a letter by thee."

It has an elegant airiness, and is tenderly lackadaisical in tone. From internal evidence it may be attributed to Lady Anne Lindsay.

Miss Blamire's songs can be arranged in two classes, whether they are English or in the Cumbrian or the Scotch dialect. There are those which are little spurts of raillery, or half-droll, half-serious narratives of every-day inci-

dents. Sometimes they are tales with morals. They have much of the quiet humour and the gentle wisdom breathed into similar songs by Lady Nairne, only Susanna Blamire's songs are unequal, her humour sparkles rather less, her wisdom is not so ripe and mellow, and her diction has not, in general, the exquisite suitability of the words of Lady Nairne's best songs. Here are good specimens of those songs which are neither comic nor tragic, but form in a sliding scale the genteel comedy of song. Besides the quotations already given from "Auld Robin Forbes," the first and the last verses have very happy touches.

"And auld Robin Forbes has gien tem a dance,
I put on my speckets to see them aw prance;
I thought o' the days when I was but fifteen,
And skipp'd wi' the best upon Forbes's Green.
Of aw things that is, I think thought is meast queer,
It brings that that's by-past and sets it down here;
I see Willy as plain as I do this bit leace,
When he teuk his coat lappet and dieghted his feace.

* * * * * * *

"When the clock had struck eight I expected him hame,
And whiles went to meet him as far as Dumbain;
Of aw hours it tell't, eight was dearest to me,
But now when it strykes there's a tear in my e'e.

Oh Willy, dear Willy! it never can be
That age, time, or death can divide thee and me;
For the yen spot o' earth that's aye dearest to me
Is the turf that has covered my Willie from me."

In "Barley Broth" the violent dispute as to whether the house-dame has put barley or rice into the pot reads like the argument of a song in a French *vaudeville*:—

"'I mek nae faut,' our Jwhonny says,
'The broth is gude and varra neyce,
I only say—it's barley broth.'
'You says what's wrong,' says I, 'it's reyce.'"

The summing up is highly characteristic:—

"Thus tryfles vex and tryfles please,
And tryfles mek the sum o' leyfe,
And tryfles mek a bonny lass
A wretched or a happy weyfe."

"Old Harry's Return" abounds in loving manliness and womanliness:—

"My Harry he smiles and he wipes aff the tear,
An' I'm doubtful again gin it can be he's here,
Till he taks wee bit Janet to sit on his knee,
And ca's her his dawty, for oh! she's like me.
Then the neighbours come in and they welcome him hame,
And I fa' a-greeting tho' muckle I think shame,
Then I steal ben the house while they talk o' the war,
For I turn cauld as death when he shows them a scar.

They tell o' ane Elliot, an' brave he måun be,
But I ken a poor soldier as brave yet as he,
For when that the Spaniards were wrecked on the tide,
'They are soldiers, my lads, let us save them,' he cried.

"The neighbours being gane, and the bairns on his knee,
He fetched a long sigh and he look'd sair at me:
'Poor woman,' quo' he, 'ye'd hae muckle to do
To get bread to yoursel' and thir wee bit things too.'
'It is true, my dear Harry, I toiled very hard,
Sent Elspie to service and Jockey to herd,
For I kent verra weel t'was an auld soldier's pride,
Aye to tak frae his king, but frae nae ane beside.'"

The mercenary wooers of "Tibbie Fowler o' the Glen" (the traditional heiress of Scotch song) are hit off almost as artistically as the suitors for "Jenny's Bawbee:"—

"There's Nabob Jock comes strutting ben,
He thinks the day's his ain,
But were he a' hung round wi' gowd,
He'd find himsel' mista'en.
* * * * *
"There's grinning Pate laughs a' day through,
The blythest lad you'll see;
But troth he laughs sae out o' place,
He'd laugh gin I did dee.

"There's Sandy he's sae fu' o' lees,
To talk wi' him is vain,
For gin we a' should say 'twas fair,
He'd prove that it did rain.
* * * * *

"The priests and lawyers ding me dead,
But Gude kens wha's the best,
And then comes in the soldier brave,
And drums out a' the rest.

"The country squire and city beau,
I have had them on their knee;
But weel I ken to gowd they bow,
And no downright to me."

In the same vein of maidenly satire are the verses—

"O Donald! ye are just the man
Who, when he's got a wife,
Begins to fratch—nae notice tain,
They're strangers a' their life.

"The fan may drop—she takes it up,
The husband keeps his chair,
She hands the kettle—gives his cup,
Without even 'Thank you, dear.'

* * * * *

"But wedlock tears away the veil,
The goddess is nae mair,
He thinks his wife a silly thing,
She thinks her man a bear."

With the sound Addisonian advice in conclusion:—

"Let then the lover be the friend,
The loving friend for life;
Think but thyself the happiest spouse,
She'll be the happiest wife."

Few songs have the dizzy delight, the strong tide of fondness in which all personal pride is swept away, of the following:—

"I'll hae a new coatie when Willy comes hame,
I'll hae a new plaidie and a' o' the same,
An' I'll hae some pearlings to make myself fine,
For it's a' to delight this dear laddie o' mine.
Bessy Bell is admired by a' sorts o' men,
I'll mind a' her fashions and how she comes ben;
I'll mind her at kirk and I'll mind her at fair,
An' never ance try to look myself mair.
* * * * * *
For I maun be happy when Willy comes hame."

There are assurances in the volunteered consolation administered by a departing lover, which have the delicious practicability and matter-of-factness of that scoured silk with the stain on it, obligingly worn by the apparition of Mrs. Veal for her better identification.

"I'll nobbut gae to yonder burn, and then I'll come and see thee."
* * * * * * *
"I'll tak a staff into my hand, and come and see my dearie O."
* * * * * * *
"I'll meet thee at the kirkgate, my ain kind dearie O."

In tribute to the two fine old ladies and their fast friendship, there is a song which Susanna

Blamire called "Miss Gilpin's Song," writing below the title, "A song for Miss Gilpin's ain singing when set at her wheel."

"Let lords and fine ladies look round them and see,
If e'er ane among them be blyther than me;
I sit at my wheely and sing through the day,
An' ca' 't my ain warld that runs rolling away.

"Sae twirl thee round, wheely, I'll sing while I may,
I'll try to be happy the whole o' the day;
If we wadna mak griefs o' bit trifles sae sma',
The warld would run smoothly roun', roun' wi' us a'.

"There's ups and downs in it, I see very plain,
For the spoke that's at bottom gets topmost again.
Sae whirl thee round, wheely, I see how things turn,
And I see too 'tis folly for mortals to mourn.

"That life is a spinster I often have read,
And too fine she draws out her spider-like thread;
A breath can destroy what's so slenderly made,
And life for her trouble has seldom been paid.

"Sae twirl thee round, wheely, I'll sing while I may,
I'll try to be happy the whole o' the day;
If we wadna mak griefs o' bit trifles sae sma',
The warld would run smoothly roun', roun' wi' us a'."

But Susanna Blamire's "What ails this heart o' mine?" is written with her life-blood. In proof

of it one has but to appeal to the wondering passionateness, the woefulness, rather implied than uttered, in the first and second verses, together with the unapproachable artlessness of their fancies—sick of love.

"What ails this heart o' mine?
What fills this watery e'e?
What gars me a' turn cauld as death
When I tak leave o' thee?
When thou art far awa'
Thou'lt dearer grow to me,
But change o' place and change o' folk
May gar thy fancy gee.

"When I gae out at e'en,
Or walk at morning ear',
Ilk rustling bush will seem to say,
'I used to meet thee there.'
There I'll sit down and cry,
And live aneath the tree,
And when a leaf fa's in my lap,
I'll ca' 't a word frae thee."

After the first and second the third verse is slightly forced, and repeats what has gone before; but the last verse returns to the yearning simplicity of the first:—

"Wi' sic thoughts in my mind,
Time through the world may gae,

And find my heart in twenty years
The same as 'tis to-day.
'Tis thoughts that bind the soul
An' keep friends in the e'e,
An' gin I think I see thee aye,
What can part thee and me?"

This is one of the few of Susanna Blamire's songs on which she herself seems to have set store. Several copies of it were found among her papers.

The nearest to "What ails this heart o' mine?" though not equal to it, are—"Ye sall walk in silk attire," and "The Waeful Heart." In the last, the eager response of the speaker to the imagined summons of her dead, records a still more beautiful and perfect trust than that in Burns's lines,—

"A thocht ungentle ne'er could be
The thocht o' Mary Morrison."

Susanna Blamire writes,—

"I follow wheresoe'er ye lead,
Ye canna lead to ill."

Susanna Blamire's song of "The Traveller's Return," said to have been written in her forty-

second year, stands quite apart in the list of her songs. It is a delicate and subtle reproduction of the feelings of a lonely old man on his return to the native country from which he has been too long absent. There are the throb and thrill of alternating expectation, doubt, and bewilderment. We are made to feel the prick of each drawback in the attainment of the cherished wish, the piteous recalling of what is lost, the keen disappointment which is half mortification and shame. Yet this at first relieves itself in wrathful petulance at the affectation and the self-conceit of "the pensy chields" and "the nymph," who cannot understand the old man, softening a little with the thought of their "fathers' names" and "her mother's face," and melting at last into manly resignation and a touching claim on their forbearance. All is as nearly as possible perfect.

Where so much is good it is not easy to make distinctions. The very first line of the song has a peculiar, tender grace that is not often found in Susanna Blamire's lines :—

"When silent time, wi' lightly foot,
Had trod on thirty years."

There is a wistful, sorrowful recognition of something which has slipped by for ever, and yet, perhaps, has never been so missed before, in the long-drawn-out repetition :—

"Those days that followed me afar,
Those happy days o' mine."

The unlooked-for desolation of the arrival is rendered complete by the late appearance of the old servant, sorely altered, like everything else, and in the same doleful humour as his master :—

"Till Donald tottered to the door,
Whom I left in his prime,
And grat to see the lad return
He bore about lang syne."

After the utter mournfulness of the climax,—

"I closed the door and sobbed aloud,
To think on auld lang syne,"

the graphic introduction of the "pensy chields" is a reaction with an under-current of humour :—

"Some pensy chields—a new-sprung race,"

(there speaks the scorn of the old Scotch-

man, with his long pedigree and his rampant Toryism,)

"Wad next their welcome pay,
Wha shuddered at my Gothic wa's,"

(after the fashion of arrogant, effeminate foplings,)

"And wished my groves away.
'Cut, cut!' they cried, 'those aged elms,'"

(in the spirit of the trim Vandalism and the toy wildernesses of the eighteenth century,)

"'Lay low yon mournfu' pine.'
'Na, Na!'"

(there is sacrilege in the thought to the old man, for—)

'Our fathers' names grow there,
'Memorials o' lang syne.'"

After all, they were not unkindly, these young kinsmen, though they were inconsiderate, and they tried to divert the listlessness of their ancient relation—"the old fogie" of present slang. But how can he enter the old town without confronting more changes there, and what should he miss most on each face that he meets and knows, but the ineffable "youthfu'

bloom?" As he revenges himself upon his young companions by undervaluing their extravagantly vaunted ball-room belle, it is with a fine shade at once of fault-finding and praise:—

"Her mother's blushing cheeks
Were fairer far lang syne."

But the crabbed critic relies, after all, on the young men's generosity, and falls back on a fellow-feeling which must exist beneath every freak of fashion:—

"Ye sons to comrades o' my youth,
Forgie an auld man's spleen,
Wha midst your gayest scenes still mourns
The days he ance has seen.

"When time has passed and seasons fled
Your hearts will feel like mine,
And aye the sang will maist delight
That minds ye o' lang syne."

Contrast the traveller's return and his reception after his thirty years' absence with the short absence of Colin from his voyage, in Jean Adam's song of "There's nae luck about the house." It was only the impatience of love that could speak of Colin as having been "lang awa'."

WHAT AILS THIS HEART O' MINE?

WHAT ails this heart o' mine?
What fills this watery e'e?
What gars me a' turn cauld as death
When I tak leave o' thee?
When thou art far awa',
Thou'lt dearer grow to me;
But change o' place and change o' folk
May gar thy fancy gee.

When I gae out at e'en,
Or walk at morning ear',
Ilk rustling bush will seem to say,
'I used to meet thee there.'
There I'll sit down and cry,
And live aneath the tree,
And when a leaf fa's in my lap,
I'll ca' 't a word frae thee.

I'll hie me to the bower
That thou wi' roses tied,
And where, wi' mony a blushing bud,
I strove myself to hide.
I'll doat on ilka spot
Where I hae been wi' thee;
And ca' to mind some kindly word
By ilka burn and tree.

Wi' sic thoughts i' my mind,
Time through the world may gae,
And find my heart in twenty years
The same as 'tis to-day.
'Tis thoughts that bind the soul,
And keep friends i' the e'e;
And gin I think I see thee aye,
What can part thee and me?

THE TRAVELLER'S RETURN.

When silent time, wi' lightly foot,
Had trod on thirty years,
I sought again my native land
Wi' mony hopes and fears:
Wha kens gin the dear friends I left
May still continue mine?
Or gin I e'er again shall taste
The joys I left langsyne?

As I drew near my ancient pile,
My heart beat a' the way;
Ilk place I pass'd seem'd yet to speak
O' some dear former day;

Those days that follow'd me afar,
Those happy days o' mine,
Whilk made one think the present joys
A' naething to langsyne!

The ivied tower now met my eye,
Where minstrels used to blaw;
Nae friend stepp'd forth wi' open hand,
Nae weel-kenn'd face I saw;
Till Donald totter'd to the door,
Whom I left in his prime,
And grat to see the lad return
He bore about langsyne.

I ran to ilka dear friend's room,
As if to find them there,
I knew where ilk ane used to sit,
And hung o'er mony a chair;
Till soft remembrance threw a veil
Across these e'en o' mine,
I closed the door, and sobb'd aloud,
To think on auld langsyne!

Some pensy chiels, a new-sprung race,
Wad next their welcome pay,
Wha shudder'd at my Gothic wa's,
And wish'd my groves away:

"Cut, cut," they cried, "those aged elms,
Lay low yon mournfu' pine:"
"Na! na! our fathers' names grow there,
Memorials o' langsyne."

To wean me frae these waefu' thoughts,
They took me to the town;
But sair on ilka weel-kenn'd face
I miss'd the youthfu' bloom.
At balls they pointed to a nymph
Whom a' declared divine;
But sure her mother's blushing cheeks
Were fairer far langsyne!

In vain I sought in music's sound
To find that magic art,
Which oft in Scotland's ancient lays
Has thrill'd through a' my heart:
One song had mony an artfu' turn,
My ear confess'd 'twas fine,
But miss'd the simple melody
I listen'd to langsyne.

Ye sons to comrades o' my youth,
Forgie an auld man's spleen,
Wha 'midst your gayest scenes still mourns
The days he ance has seen:

When time has pass'd and seasons fled,
Your hearts will feel like mine;
And aye the song will maist delight
That minds ye o' langsyne!

AND YE SHALL WALK IN SILK ATTIRE.

And ye shall walk in silk attire,
And siller hae to spare,
Gin ye'll consent to be his bride,
Nor think o' Donald mair.

O wha wad buy a silken gown
Wi' a puir broken heart;
Or what's to me a siller crown,
Gin frae my love I part?

The mind wha's every wish is pure,
Far dearer is to me;
And ere I'm forced to break my faith
I'll lay me down an' dee!

For I hae pledged my virgin troth
Brave Donald's fate to share;
And he has gi'en to me his heart,
Wi' a' its virtues rare.

His gentle manner won my heart,
He gratefu' took the gift;
Could I but think to tak' it back—
It would be waur than theft!

For langest life can ne'er repay
The love he bears to me;
And ere I'm forced to break my troth
I'll lay me down an' dee.

BARLEY BROTH.

If tempers were put up to seal,
Our Jwohn's wad bear a deuced preyce;
He vowed 'twas barley i' the broth,
"Upon my word," says I, "it's reyce."

"I mek nea faut," our Jwohnny says,
"The broth is gude and varra neyce;
I only say—it's barley broth—"
"Tou says what's wrang," says I, "it's reyce."

"Did ever mortal hear the like!
As if I hadn't sense to tell!
Tou may think reyce the better thing,
But barley broth dis just as well."

"And sae it mud, if it was there,
The deil a grain is i' the pot;
But tou mun ayways thrup yen down—
I've drawn the deevil of a lot."

"And what's the lot that I have drawn?
Pervarsion is a woman's neam!
Sae fares-t'e-weel, I'll serve my king,
And never, never more come heam."

Now Jenny frets frae mworn to neet,
The Sunday cap's nae langer neyce,
She aye puts barley i' the broth,
And hates the varra neame o' reyce.

Thus tryfles vex, and tryfles please,
And tryfles mek the sum o' leyfe;
And tryfles mek a bonny lass
A wretched or a happy weyfe!

JEAN GLOVER.

1758—1801.

AYRSHIRE is a land of green pastures, level woods and fields, and bleak moors. Even its sea-border is rendered in many places unpicturesque by a stretch of barren sand. It needs the solan goose-haunted rock of Ailsa Craig, and the beetling mountains of the island of Arran opposite, to redeem its character. But Ayrshire is green as the Emerald Isle; and the houses of its little cottar farmers were wont to be whitewashed with a self-assertion and an independence, part dogged and part cheery. Its climate is that of the Devonshire of Scotland; and as Devonshire lanes have a rich flora, no wild flowers in Scotland bloom "by bank and brae," north, south, east, or west, like the luckengowan of Kyle, the pimpernel and the variegated

thistle of Carrick. As for birds, one who dearly loved Ayrshire asserted that walking along by the "lush" greenness and budding whiteness of an Ayrshire hedgerow in the end of May, he could have caught the young linnets, which were tottering on the sprays and tumbling out of their nests, in hatfuls.

Ayrshire has other singers besides birds, and other distinctions than wild flowers. The natives are a strong, resolute race, with wild Irish blood in them here and there. They are conspicuous in whatever cause they adopt and make their own. Now they are stern, devoted Covenanters with the Fool of Fenwick—Guthrie; now on the losing side of high Toryism, with poor Lord Kilmarnock, who in his trial before the House of Lords, and in his execution on Tower Hill, made such havoc among the hearts of the fine ladies of London; and again, they are winning the people's hearts and braving obloquy for half a century with Thomas Cochrane, Lord Dundonald.

The women of Ayrshire had a gift of being known for good or for evil before "Robbie

Burns" bestowed his immortality on the Ayrshire lasses who were his contemporaries. "May Collean," the Scottish sultana Schehezerade, who stopped the immolation of wives perpetrated by a "fause Sir John" of ballad renown, was an Ayrshire lass; so was Jean, Countess of Cassilis, who eloped with the gipsy Davie; an Ayrshire wife, though a Renfrew lass, was Christian Shaw, daughter of the Laird of Barragan, who had the horrible fate, when a girl of thirteen, to be reckoned bewitched by one of the Barragan maid-servants, and to cause the burning for witchcraft of five wretched men and women on the Gallows-green of Paisley. But Christian Shaw did other and better things for Renfrew and Paisley before she fell, with her foibles and infirmities, into the ghostly hands of the minister of Kilmaurs. With the aid of Lady Blantyre, she inaugurated fine spinning and bleaching, and the great thread manufacture of Paisley, towards the close of the seventeenth century.

Barbara Gilmour, of Dunlop, who acquired the art of cheese-making in Ireland, whither her

family had fled from persecution, and brought it back with her to her native village, was yet another Ayrshire woman; and a fifth was Jean Glover of Kilmarnock, with a desperate strain of gipsy wildness and recklessness in her temperament. She was born in 1758, a year later than Robert Burns, and not long after that ride in the coach during which Miss Jean Elliot of Minto composed her "Flowers of the Forest."

"Auld Kilmarnock" was then a long street, made up of the houses and stances of weavers, who were chiefly employed in weaving the Kilmarnock cowl, the universal nightcap of Scotland. Though Jean was but a poor child in one of these weavers' families, she must have been reasonably well educated in the New Testament, the Proverbs of Solomon, the Shorter Catechism, and the multiplication table. She must have learnt, too, something of the art of writing; for she would go to the parish school in her "daidly" and bare feet, and sit on the same "furm" with boys twice as big as herself, who could not help having a sneaking kindness for wild Jean.

Jean's nature could never have been a meek or saintly one in her splendid, handsome youth. But surely it was comparatively an innocent lass who ran about to the buzz and hum of wheels, and the rattle of treadles, with companions bold and heedless as herself, though the "wabster carles" might rise from their benches, lay aside their broadsheets, their sermons which had been thundered on the moss by the comrades of Cameron and Peden, and come out covered with blue and red worsted thrums, to shake their heads to carlines in linen jackets and mutches, and predict solemnly that no good would come of a set of light-heeled, light-headed loons and hempies, who were fast degenerating around them. No good came of them so far as Jean Glover was concerned. Yet there must have been still some good in Jean while she was a strapping young woman in her buff jacket, linsey-woolsey petticoat, and snooded or "screened" hair. She would draw water at the well near the cross where young Boyd had shot Lord Soulis with an arrow from his cross-bow, or stray up the Fenwick water by

which Boyd had lain in ambush, and beheld the retribution that in turn reached the Boyds' great castle of Dean.

It was a black day for Jean Glover when she began to attend the village fairs and races all round Kilmarnock. These fairs and races were in great part the result of a revolt against the high-minded stubborn despotism of the David Deanses of the West; and it might be the reaction of a curbed, galled nature which helped to work the mischief in Jean Glover's case too. Be that as it may, Jean played with fire, gaped and stared, laughed and fleeched. At last she became "madly enamoured" of Burns's "slight o' hand blackguard," ran away with him, and married him. Thenceforth she was launched on a career of wanton riot and disreputable adventure, which, like a troubled sea, could cast up nothing save mire and dirt.

But it had better be said here that Jean Glover is a proof of the truth of the proverb, "Give a dog an ill name and hang him." Poor Jean had hard lines dealt to her—not only in her hapless fortunes, but in the words spoken

of her by a man who might have spared her.

Robert Burns was not wont to be hard on aught but what he held to be slavish meanness or base hypocrisy; but he was hard in his withering words on the poor strolling player and "randy gangrel" wife from whose lips he took down her sweet hill-flavoured song. A spade may be a spade, and yet a taste for strongly-spiced epithets may exist also. When a book was being written on Burns's contemporaries, and an investigation made among old Ayrshire men and women, it was found that Jean Glover was bad enough in all truth, but was not worse than a roughly-hardened tramp, a wilful, regardless woman. Although she "rugged and reived" at whatever came in her way, still she was not a thief in the ordinary meaning of the term, and she was faithful to her roving, ne'er-do-well husband, who had beguiled her to turn her back for ever on the dull Weavers' Row in Kilmarnock, and to wander the country with him—the best singer and actor in his troop.

Jean had wrung the hearts of what kindred owned her by going off and wedding the player Richard; yet he might not have been unkind to her beyond her deserts, reprobate though he was. Her daily round was not always among the filth and scum of towns. She had many a trudge with him through the peat-hags where white flowers hold up their spotless heads above the brown water; or she walked knee-deep in ling, startling the plover; or scrambled in a flutter of rags through thickets of trailing brambles or wilding sloes. The roads were then execrable. When little Hugh, Earl of Loudon, was conveyed as a child from Loudon Castle to Edinburgh, only fifty years before Jean Glover's epoch, it was in a pannier slung across the back of a horse, and accompanied by a servant on another horse; the journey occupying the better part of a week.

Jean must have shared with her husband and his allies many a meal taken from their wallets and spread out by a convenient spring, where she could fill her kettle when there was time to kindle a fire, and where the Meg-Merrilies stew

—come by anyhow—could be eaten hot. Many a sleep Jean must have snatched when wrapped in her duffle cloak, and pillowed by the bracken. Would not the loneliness, the freedom, after which Jean had panted (though she had found it, poor wretch! to be only the worst kind of slavery), the scents and sounds of wild things around her, recall to her fitfully and dreamily some purer fancies of the settled, righteous homes, and the peaceful, virtuous hearths among which she had been bred, and which she had "madly" forsaken?

When Jean came back to Kilmarnock, she brazened out her disgrace in the eyes of her sedate townsmen by playing on her tambourine, as she did at the close mouth in Irvine, to attract newly-landed sailors, ploughmen, and apprentice weavers to the juggling tricks of her husband in the room down the close. There she flaunted in her player's finery of scarlet, tinsel, and glass beads, "the brawest woman that had ever been seen to step in leather shoon." But she could not have been half so comely as when, in her simple jacket and modest snood, she first

"forgathered" with the players. Notwithstanding, did not the words of the Song of Kyle, which she sang as she tossed the tambourine above her head, bring back in an irresistible rush, alike to the singer and to her audience, wafts of the fragrance of the wild thyme and the heather, and echoes of the burnies which hold in their bickering the blithe babble of children and the soft "sough" of good women's sighs?

Jean Glover dropped down in her endless march with her husband somewhere about Letterkenny, in Ireland, and died there in 1801, aged forty-two years, hardly past the prime of womanhood.

"Ower the moor among the heather" reads as if Jean had first lilted it out amid the wilds in the early days of her wanderings, before the spring had been taken out of her spirit by low companionship, bodily weariness, and taunting shame, which sits and grins even on the ill-clad backs of those who have as little to lose as Jean had.

"Coming through the craigs o' Kyle,
Amang the bonnie bloomin' heather,
There I met a bonnie lassie
Keeping a' her ewes thegither.
Ower the moor, among the heather,
Ower the moor, among the heather,
There I met a bonnie lassie
Keeping a' her ewes thegither."

There is an ineffable buoyance, an abounding blitheness in the words as well as in the tune. In keeping with it, there is a rich rejoicing in the wide world as the singer had known it in the wilds. There is little more in the song, unless it be that in the warmth of the closing vow we see a reflection of Jean's own delirium of love for the player Richard, which had caused her to cast from her so much that a woman holds dear :—

"Ower the moor among the heather,
Down among the blooming heather,
By sea and sky! she shall be mine,
The bonnie lass among the heather."

O'ER THE MUIR AMANG THE HEATHER.

COMIN' through the craigs o' Kyle,
Amang the bonnie bloomin' heather,
There I met a bonnie lassie
Keepin' a' her flocks thegither.
Ower the muir amang the heather,
Ower the muir amang the heather,
There I met a bonnie lassie
Keepin' a' her flocks thegither.

Says I, my dear, where is thy hame?
In muir or dale, pray tell me whither?
Says she, I tent the fleecy flocks
That feed amang the bloomin' heather.
Ower the muir, &c.

We laid us down upon a bank,
Sae warm and sunnie was the weather;
She left her flocks at large to rove
Amang the bonnie bloomin' heather.
Ower the muir, &c.

She charmed my heart, and aye sinsyne
I couldna think on ony ither;
By sea and sky! she shall be mine,
The bonnie lass amang the heather.
Ower the muir, &c.

MRS. ELIZABETH HAMILTON.

1758—1816.

RATHER more than a century ago, Elizabeth Hamilton, a lively little girl of eight years of age, was in the habit of riding every Monday morning on her old horse Lochaber through the bean and oat fields, and round the broomy knowes and stony craigs which lie near a certain farm-house in the Carse of Gowrie, some four miles distant from Stirling. In that town she was boarded with "a single lady," an acquaintance of her aunt, Mrs. Marshall, and waited on by her own special servant-lass, Isabel Irvine.

Elizabeth Hamilton was Irish by her birthplace, but Scotch by descent and nurture. She came of a "gentle" branch of the "haughty Hamiltons." The estate of Woodhall had been granted by a charter from Pope Honorius to

one of her ancestors, "for good deeds done in the Holy Land in the first Crusade." Her great-grandfather had been as strong on the side of the Kirk in his day; and he quitted Scotland in discontent on the intrusion of the Liturgy, buying an estate in Ulster, and settling in Ireland. His son Charles, who held a civil appointment under Government, married a beauty and an heiress. His wife took the liberty of squandering her own fortune, and so embarrassed him that he was tempted to spend a part of the public money in payment of his private debts. He died broken-hearted before his dishonour was publicly known. His son, Elizabeth Hamilton's father, quitted the university, and entered a mercantile house in London. Being forced to abandon London, owing to ill-health, he began business in Belfast. Here he married, and died early in 1759, a year after the birth of his youngest child Elizabeth, leaving his widow and three children in reduced circumstances. Mrs. Hamilton consented to give Elizabeth, at six years of age, to be brought up by her aunt in Stirlingshire. Elizabeth's mother, an intelli-

gent woman, was only able to visit her girl once. In her ninth year the child was left altogether an orphan, and, like Miss Sukey Blamire, owed to her father's sister the care and affection which surrounded her in childhood and youth. This Aunt Marshall was also something of a character, although in a different style from Aunt Simpson. She was a daughter of that Charles Hamilton who came to so much grief with his beauty and heiress. She had been handsome, clever, and carefully educated. Before she was sixteen, she had been engaged to the eldest son of a baronet. Her father's ruin followed. She was thrown on her own exertions, and was thankful to earn a livelihood by becoming a humble companion to a distant relative of rank, who resided in Bath. On the death of this lady, her daughter, the wife of an old Stirlingshire laird, carried Miss Hamilton home with her. The poor and proud dependant, who, although her friend and mistress was kind-hearted, was expected to make herself useful in a thousand ways, suffered countless mortifications.

At last she consented to accept the addresses of worthy Mr. Marshall, a peasant-born farmer of competent means, to whom Elizabeth Hamilton applied the sentence of Burns, that "he held his patent of nobility direct from Almighty God." Such a man was not likely to protest against the introduction of a little orphan niece to fill up pleasantly his honoured wife's leisure. He did not fail, for the thirty-two years of their union, to take a gentle pride in the child as giving life to the otherwise childless home. Elizabeth Hamilton repaid his generosity by as warm affection as daughter ever showed to father.

From Monday till Saturday little Elizabeth scampered up the steep streets of Stirling in order to sit in her place in Mr. Manson's school for boys and girls. There she learnt, first writing (she could already read well), geography, and the use of the globes, at the same time attending a dancing school; next French; and afterwards music on the harpsichord, and drawing. The spirited child had already taken advantage of her country rearing by "paidling"

in the burn in July, and sliding on its ice in December. She had yet other sources of education. She played "the ba'" under the shadow of Mar's Wark and Argyle's Lodging. On Wednesday afternoons, when she was tired of going to "the nuts" and "the blackberries" with the other school-girls, she climbed the Castle Rock and the Abbey Craig, and looked down on the silver Links of the Forth, the green walls of the Ochils, and the wooded vale of Strathmore, far away to the heathery wilds of Monteath and Balquidder, and the rugged blue line of the Grampians, with the towering peak of Benledi. She saw the battle-fields of Bannockburn, Sauchieburn, and Falkirk, as well as the more primitive fighting ground of the Carron, just at the time when Ossian, in the guise of Macpherson, or Macpherson in the guise of Ossian, was making the romantic world ring with the mighty deeds of Fingal. To little Elizabeth Hamilton the suggestive names of "the Bloody Field," "the King's Knot," "Ballingeich's Entry," and "Douglas's Room" were household words. Neither was she a stolid barn-

door child, to use them without association. The old-fashioned little woman, adopted by a childless, elderly couple, and without brothers or sisters to share the adoption, did more than take her patriotic fever betimes. While she had their high places lying stretched out at her feet, she read Blind Harry and Barbour with a will, and made heroes of Wallace and Robert the Bruce. At an exceptionally tender age she came across an English translation of the Iliad, and extended her regard liberally to Hector and Achilles.

Elizabeth, shrewd and sensible in her quaint baby wisdom, had at hand yet another branch of study, of which she was to become mistress. From the young maid-servant, Isabel Irvine, and her kindred, Elizabeth acquired an intimate knowledge of the turns of thought, the failings and prejudices, as well as the virtues, of Scotch peasant women.

Every Saturday night the child mounted joyfully her Dobbin, Lochaber, and rode home brimful of school stories. These she dispensed to her indulgent aunt and uncle in the parlour,

and to a not less sympathetic audience in the farm kitchen. Every Sabbath Elizabeth "sat" under an orthodox minister of the Kirk (though her uncle Marshall was an Episcopalian) during two long diets of public worship. After kirk-time she repeated to her aunt the psalms, the catechism, and the heads of the sermon, which were required from her, as from all well-brought-up young Presbyterians of her generation. The grown woman Elizabeth gave her testimony that the discipline was dry and injudiciously rigid, but not without its counterbalancing lessons in self-restraint, patience, and application.

At thirteen Elizabeth left school. She paid visits to Edinburgh and Glasgow, where she had lessons from masters. These visits supplied her with long-cherished memories of college friends, promenades on the Green, carpet dances, "with refreshments at the side-boards." Save for these interludes, the girl's life was not perfectly wholesome. It was a sedentary life. She was shut up with elderly people. One of her duties was to read aloud every evening for the

instruction and amusement of the little home circle. But more than this: Mrs. Marshall was so agreeably surprised by her niece's journal of a Highland tour, that the elder lady showed the manuscript to a friend, who sent it, without the author's knowledge, to a provincial magazine, in which it flourished duly. On the other hand, Elizabeth was cautioned by her aunt to restrain her love of reading; and one day, when on the point of being surprised by visitors, Elizabeth hid Kaimes' "Elements of Criticism" under a sofa cushion (is not the same story told of Fanny Burney?), lest she should be accused by her neighbours of pedantry. In revenge on herself and them, and in sheer dearth of intellectual interest, she took to writing a novel in letters secretly. It was historical, of course, for she had Stirling Castle in her eye; but it was not in old Scotch, for Elizabeth was anxious, at this time, to improve her English. She was, besides, a little frightened at the growing vulgarity of Scotland and the Scotch, to which no writer of eminence had turned his attention since Allan

Ramsay wrote his "Gentle Shepherd," which Mr. Mackenzie kept at the staff's end in his *Lounger*. Her historical period was no later than that of James VI.'s reign. She elected Arabella Stewart as her royal heroine, and transplanted the characters to England. With artlessness and girlish narrowness both of thought and feeling, Elizabeth sketched herself and her only sister, from whom she had been separated nearly all her life, in the sisters Almeria and Matilda. Elizabeth took care to bring up these minor heroines apart, and in the description of their meeting, and the rapid growth of their friendship, the young author sought to foreshadow her own coveted reunion with her sister and their sympathetic attachment.

Another premature, and possibly morbid, effect of this period was that a sceptic of the school of David Hume startled and disturbed Elizabeth's religious faith. It was only after the most searching investigations into the evidences of Christianity that the distressed and dismayed girl could return and rest in peace on the pro-

mises of the Gospel—never again to be disturbed.

Elizabeth's good principles, her calm sense and kindliness of temper, prevented her, even at the age of eighteen, from making insurmountable bugbears of adverse circumstances. She was taught (and it was also instinctive in her) to keep intellectual efforts and attainments properly subordinate to moral practice. She had no craving to occupy a chill eminence above her companions, or to be pointed out as a rapt poetess, holding herself removed from notable housekeeping and darning. She was better educated than Miss Sukey Blamire; without the aristocratic pride of Miss Jean Elliot and of Lady Anne Barnard; and she was of stronger and broader, though perhaps less delicate, perceptions than Lady Nairne. Elizabeth Hamilton did not in the end refuse to acknowledge the gift that was in her; but, in her comparatively circumscribed youth, she did not dream of asserting her mental superiority to the people around her.

With a keen appreciation of intellectual

society, she still took the most cheerful view of the merits of the men and the women in her neighbourhood, and entered into life-long friendships with several of them. It was not till the close of her life, and in self-defence, that she admitted in a letter to Hector Macneil that during her early life in Scotland it had been her lot to encounter few who understood the commerce of intellect, and of these few almost none who would deign to exchange their precious ores for her unpolished pebbles. She afterwards spoke of the change which took place on her going to England, where her gifted and genial brother introduced her to his own associates. Men of learning and men of wit then addressed themselves to her freely, and both men and women of high position and talents treated her on terms of equality. She added humorously, that often she was inclined to quote the nursery rhyme, "Surely this is no me." It is worth while to note her youthful obscurity and her contentment with the fact, when one remembers that Elizabeth Hamilton was one of the first women who lived to redeem

the literary woman from her old, bad reputation of bearing only another name for an arrogant and domineering fool.

It was in Elizabeth's favour, too, that her home was in the country. Ingram's Crook, to which Mr. and Mrs. Marshall removed just as Elizabeth grew up, was a home of much rural beauty.

It is true that we are apt to doubt the existence of genuine admiration for nature at a time when writers were given to expressing such admiration in vague, grandiloquent terms, encumbered with much far-fetched classic imagery. As in the case of Alexander Ross, of Lochlee, the author of the "Fair Shepherdess," these writers have been known to spend the greater part of their lives amid strikingly picturesque scenes without a single reference to them stealing into the works which were composed under such influences. Nevertheless, beauty must have been a thing of beauty to the poet, and must have incorporated itself with his being, though he did not as a rule analyse it, and, after having pulled it to pieces, put into it his personality, and cause it to

smile with his hopes and sigh with his fears. The great exception to this paralysing self-restraint, prior to Wordsworth, was Burns, who in one of his songs records of his Jean,—

> "I see her in the dewy flowers,
> I see her sweet and fair;
> I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
> I hear her charm the air."

Ingram's Crook was a cottage with thatched roof, and walls covered with roses and honeysuckle. Its name had a chivalric association, derived from the gallant old English knight, Sir Ingram Umfraville, who, according to the legend, tried to ford the bend of the burn, and was drowned there in the rout after Bannockburn. It was a fit scene for love; and the love was not the less sincere because it was that of an old wedded couple, gladdened by the devoted duty paid to them by a good and modest young girl. Nor is the song of "My ain fireside" less true because it was written by a wise and benignant old maid of the garret, which is wont, after all, to look better on a close inspection than from a distance.

Both in the virtues and in the faults of her character,—in its sterling cheerfulness and friendliness, in its old-fashionedness and self-consciousness, as well as in its dash of conceit and sententiousness,—Elizabeth Hamilton, like the rest of the world, owed much to her original surroundings.

It had been a happy season for Elizabeth when her brother, five years her senior, came to Scotland to visit her and the rest of his relations there. She did not find him a less affectionate and playful companion because he was inclined to take a fatherly charge of his prim, yet roguish little sister. The brother and sister parted exchanging promises of correspondence, which they kept with "inviolable fidelity."

It was a happier season still for Elizabeth when she resigned her fancy picture of the meeting with her sister to realise its glad fulfilment, and paid a long visit to her native Ireland. But the reunion, in each instance, was temporary. While the brother in the little family had already got a cadetship in India, the

lamented death of their aunt Marshall, shortly after Elizabeth's return, rendered her life at Ingram's Crook very solitary for a young woman. In her unselfish regard for her uncle's comfort, she tied herself down to her seat at the head of his table, in the chimney-corner, or in the window opposite to him, making light in his widowed home. She hardly ever quitted the old man till his death eight years after. Thus she spent ungrudgingly the flower of her age from her twenty-first to her twenty-ninth year.

The portraits of Elizabeth Hamilton represent her as a slight woman, wearing a shapeless gown, and round the throat such a frill as was sometimes worn in the latter half of the century. She has brown hair, curling over a full forehead; sleepy, yet arch eyes, under marked brows; a straight, large nose; and a soft mouth, with full under lip. The copious letter-writing in which she had already begun to indulge conveys the impression of a well-brought-up young lady, with remarkable clearness of discernment and soundness of judgment. Strong in her untried principles, and with a good deal of self-

satisfaction in that unshaken strength, she was, at the same time, a courageous, cordial, loving-hearted woman. In the sacrifice which she made of her youth in order to solace the old age of the man who had sheltered her childhood, virtue must have been its own reward; while vanity, too, had its sop. But Elizabeth's great source of refreshment ("a second education," as her biographer, Miss Benger, very correctly calls it) was her correspondence with her deservedly dear brother. The prospect of his return home towards the end of the period, covered, while still a young man, with scholarly distinction, and appointed for an honourable task, must have been very gratifying to Elizabeth.

That was the great age of letter-writing—we beg its pardon, of epistolary correspondence—and not of the frittered-away note-writing of to-day. Women, particularly, revelled in such an expression of their opinions and feelings. With a royal disregard to consequences, as well as to heavy postage, they threw themselves on the honour of their correspondents in giving

confidences. The eighteenth century reads better in its formal saws, its determined sprightliness, its airy little flights of sentiment, than the nineteenth will read in its conflicting duties, its complicated motives, its subtleties of analysis. The misfortune is that the fair letter-writers acquired a large resemblance in the practice of their art. There may be, of course, a little more laying down the law here, and of somewhat ponderous vivacity there; a more fatal plunge into bathos on this side, a more comical languishing and coquetting with her own graces, and with a sublime elation in her own laurels on that; but Lucy Aikin's letters might be Elizabeth Hamilton's, Fanny Burney's, Anna Grant's, almost down to Anna Seward's. Still, let us deal gently with these old letter-writers, Scotch and English. The Scotch, be it said, however, have decidedly the best of it, though they, too, want the inimitable freshness and lightness of their French sisters. The letters did not fail in fancy and feeling, however stiffened, spun out, and overlaid. They were written by good and gracious women,

faithfully fond daughters, sisters, wives, and mothers, who righteously discharged their obligations, and generously lavished their tenderness—the fragrance of whose works, done a hundred years ago, continues to embalm the workers' names.

Elizabeth Hamilton's earlier letters savour too much of "The Polite Letter-writer," and of "Elegant Extracts;" but there are indications of the benevolent wisdom which threw such a dignity round her in the end, and there are occasionally exquisite touches of human nature.

The absence of their Charles was all that marred Elizabeth's stay with her sister in Ireland. Elizabeth has a little aching fear that she has offended him by taking it upon her to give him good advice, and that he will think (in which he will not be entirely wrong) that he has got a little starched, cynical prude for a younger sister.

There is a pleasing chronicle of the family likeness, on account of which Elizabeth was called "little Charles" at Belfast; and the saucy

fling with which her aunt says, "Aweel, she's muckle better faured!" deserves to be remembered.

The letters abound in wistful wondering how he will look in the black beard which he has grown since they parted, and in conjuring up the old stripling figure playing on the flute, in the vain effort to attain one of the fashionable accomplishments of the day.

Cordial thanks are offered on one occasion for the gift of the muslin which "you mention for a wedding suit." But the thanks are accompanied by the bridling remark, that "if it is to be laid up for that occasion, I don't think it need be in any hurry; but if it arrive in safety, I shall perhaps use the freedom of wearing it beforehand." There are full particulars of the peaceful monotony of domestic life at Ingram's Crook—the quiet, but active mornings spent in farming and housekeeping; the quaint political discussions on the American war between the uncle and the niece at the one-o'clock dinner; the "rattle at the harpsichord;" the brisk game at backgammon; the sedate reading aloud

every evening from seven to eleven of history and travel, with now and then a favourite novel to excite a laugh—a custom not intermitted because she who had instituted it was no longer there to hear.

With a quiver of grateful delight, Elizabeth writes that, after she had gone through the agony of finding the ship in which she believed her brother had sailed, posted as "seen off Cuba in great distress," she read at length the announcement of its having come into port, and discovered his name in the list of arrivals. She had become more composed by the time she referred to the two "young lady friends" who were keeping her company, and congratulating her on the prospect of her brother's return. Though they were both resolved to "set their best hats at him" the moment he landed, they "would perhaps debate the propriety of sending their compliments to a young gentleman."

It was during her life of deep seclusion, and almost complete banishment from society, that Elizabeth experienced such a shipwreck of her womanly hopes and eclipse of her womanly

dreams as compasses the wreck of many a woman's nature. There was a "lad" in the case, and there had been trysts by the Bannockburn, and partings by the white yett or gate of Ingram's Crook; but there was to be no second version of the wedded love which Elizabeth had witnessed between her uncle and aunt. The troth-plight was broken; the fond lover never became the faithful husband.

In similar circumstances there are women who think it no shame, but rather a kind of redeeming glory, to sink every other faith and blessing in the one faith and blessing which they have hopelessly lost. Elizabeth Hamilton was endowed with strength of character, and had been well educated; and her misfortune had a different effect. She did not suffer as a Spartan woman might have suffered; she did not hug her sorrow in her own brave breast; but, like a Christian woman, she rose above it in every quality by the exercise of which she might help and cheer her fellow-creatures. It is in allusion to this great trial of her youth, that, in her old age, and with pathetic jest, she

reflects upon the huge mistake which was made by the dull, matter-of-fact friend who, deceived by Elizabeth's forced and feverish gaiety, pointed her out when she was really walking wearily in the dim darkness of her forlornness, as "a creature who could never be wae!"

With her brother's return occurred one of those crises when events crowd and jostle each other in an otherwise eventless history. Ingram's Crook was irradiated by Charles Hamilton's presence while he stayed at home and wrote his history of the Rohilla war. Then came Elizabeth's first visit along with him to London, where he went to settle, with the purpose of translating from the Persian the code of Mussulman laws—the arduous undertaking for which he had been so honourably chosen.

The dawn of a new life for Elizabeth was darkened by her uncle Marshall's death—the sudden snapping after long decay of an old man's life. The change involved Elizabeth's quitting Ingram's Crook and joining her brother, who had had five years' leave of absence granted him for his important task.

But long before this period had expired Charles Hamilton died an early death. His health had been undermined by a foreign climate and severe study; and rapid consumption found him a ready prey. This was the great calamity of Elizabeth Hamilton's life. In allusion to it she said deliberately, "With him died my last hopes of earthly happiness." There was reason in what she said. Her youth was already gone; one friend, who might have been "a nearer one still," had been weighed in the balance and found wanting; and her sister had married and settled in Ireland. But Elizabeth was wont to record thankfully the gradual rising, above the sombre grey of the horizon, of new prospects in life, new interests, new friends, and new powers and sources of usefulness. In the midst of premature infirmity and confirmed bad health, she was fain to look back and reckon up humbly what had been the numerous blessings of her lot, and to praise God for "every year" being "happier than the last."

In the end the family difficulties of Mrs. Blake (Katherine Hamilton) became such as rendered

it desirable that she should reside with Elizabeth. From that time the sisters lived together, staying for four years after their brother's death either in Suffolk or in Berkshire. The two women were a comfort to each other, leading almost as quiet and purely domestic a life as that of Elizabeth and her uncle Marshall at Ingram's Crook. If youth had carried away with it its buoyant hopes, no less than its tumult of bliss and anguish, the sisters were now slowly recovering from the blow which had stunned them; learning more perfectly the great lesson of resignation, and regaining heart for venturing once more in the world's business.

Charles Hamilton had occasionally urged on his bosom friend and dearest sister Bess, that the pleasure and the profit which she diffused by her personal influence, she might diffuse still more widely by writing. In 1785 she had sent a contribution to *The Lounger*, which was received and accepted by the editor without any knowledge of the author. Partly in obedience to her brother's wishes, partly under the influence of Dr. Gregory and the members of his

family, with whom she had latterly become acquainted, she published in succession her novels of "The Hindoo Rajah" and "The Modern Philosophers," and her popular tale, "The Cottagers of Glenburnie." These books had decided merit, and did their work in their day. "The Cottagers of Glenburnie," the most unpretending of the three, lives still. Isabel Irvine's little mistress of the Stirling school-days had grown a middle-aged literary woman; and not simply a literary woman, but an enlightened philanthropist. She recalled the Isabel Irvines of her youth, with their stumbling-blocks and fetters, and contrasted these unfavourably (as Mary Berry did on visiting Scotland) with what she believed to be the greater advantages, in social respects, enjoyed by the better specimens of English labourers' families with which she had come in contact during her sojourn in the south. She wrote "The Cottagers of Glenburnie" with a will, for the benefit of her humbler countrywomen. To her credit and to theirs, the tale did wonders in remedying the evil she condemned—the fatal

vis inertia of "I canna be fashed," which lingers, now, chiefly as a tradition of darker ages. Not without its pleasant side is the anecdote that the veritable Isabel Irvine, whom her young mistress had taken pains to instruct and train, lived to read "The Cottagers of Glenburnie" in a copy sent to her by the author. Nay, more, it is on record that Isabel lent out her copy at "a penny the read;" thus, Scotch-woman-like, not only glorying in spreading her old mistress's fame and usefulness, but having an eye to her own private interest in the transaction.

The publication of her books brought Elizabeth Hamilton—become Mrs. Elizabeth Hamilton—with honour on the stage of literature. She and her sister now settled at Bath. The brilliant Bath of Jane Austen and Fanny Burney was familiar to Elizabeth, through listening in girlhood to the reminiscences of her aunt Marshall, who had lived there in her office of "humble companion" during the palmiest days of the great English watering-place. Aunt Marshall had loved to recall Bath and its cele-

brities, when time had plucked the personal sting from their associations.

Elizabeth Hamilton lived and wrote during an interregnum in letters both in England and Scotland. In England, Johnson, Goldsmith, Burke, Sir Joshua, Garrick, and their set had passed away; William Cowper, in his self-banishment at Olney, and Hayley, little dreaming that he would be forgotten in a single generation, save for his vanity and his friendships, were only inaugurating the next great *régime* of Scott, Byron, Moore, Southey, Coleridge, and Wordsworth. The London where Elizabeth Hamilton received her tribute of praise had just seen the last of the highly majestic queens of letters—Mrs. Montague and Mrs. Chapone. Mrs. Barbauld was laying down the sceptre, and consenting to be private and homely. Still more unassuming was Mrs. Barbauld's gentle, well-informed niece, Lucy Aikin. Joanna Baillie was of the same generation, and so was Madame D'Arblay, when she managed to come across from France at intervals, before she settled finally in her native country. Amongst

these ladies, Horace Walpole's favourite, Mary Berry, flitted now and then like a star from another sphere — not without a suspicion of wilfulness and condescension when she found herself at any time in the act of leaving Strawberry Hill for Hampstead. Elizabeth Hamilton was on friendly terms with the most of her compeers. She was particularly friendly with her countrywoman, Joanna Baillie—to whom she could talk, among other things, of old Glasgow, its college and green.

It was not till 1803, nearly ten years after the death of her brother, that Elizabeth Hamilton ended a long, rambling, enjoyable tour of the English lakes by revisiting Scotland. Her journey was in some respects a triumphal progress. She had before this published the "Letters on Education," which won the approbation of Dugald Stewart, and was now engaged in writing, from restricted sources, the "Memoirs of Agrippina." A few months' residence in Edinburgh, with the "open sesame" Elizabeth Hamilton possessed to its most cultivated society, so delighted her, that having no par-

ticular tie to England, she made up her mind to remove thither with her sister. In George Street, Edinburgh, instead of in Bath, their home was fixed from this time.

Edinburgh was no longer the Edinburgh which Burns found it—when Robertson and Blair were the censors of literature, when stately Lord Glencairn and queer Lord Buchan were his patrons, and Jane, Duchess of Gordon, his hostess. Neither was it yet the Edinburgh when Sir Walter made a summer of winter in Castle Street, nor when Wilson, Hogg, and young Lockhart perpetrated the Chaldean manuscript. Dugald Stewart was there; so were Playfair and Alison; and there was some word of an accomplished young Mr. Scott, who, although he walked the Parliament House, had begun housekeeping at Lasswade. Mrs. Brunton, a minister's wife in the city, was taking advantage of the more liberal days in the Kirk to write "Self-Control," without bringing scandal upon her husband. Mrs. Grant of Laggan had migrated from the "mountains" to the town. A "long," awkward woman, with

the affectation of a drawl, and with a difficulty in hearing, she was gifted with a comprehensive mind and a warm heart. Mrs. Cockburn no longer presided over her piquant suppers, or issued her *bons mots* and squibs, like an old Frenchwoman of quality. Lady Anne Lindsay had long flown to London, and was on the eve of a farther flight to the Cape of Good Hope. Mrs. Keith Murray had vanished in the shades of Balcarres. Of all the old notabilities, only dignified Miss Jean Elliot, of the Minto family, remained. She still resided in her house in Brown Square, and went out for an airing in her sedan-chair.

Elizabeth Hamilton immediately took rank among the wisest and best of a select company. The Government, to its credit, granted her an annuity. For twelve years, amid fast-failing health, she was engaged in every intellectual, charitable, and truly religious enterprise of old Edinburgh. After she was a complete invalid and largely a prisoner in her own room, until her death at Harrogate in 1816, in her fifty-ninth year, her house was a chosen meeting-

place for all those engaged in higher objects. In the end, Elizabeth Hamilton had gone to England for change of air and scene, which had often proved beneficial to her before, but was powerless then. Unpretending and reverent in her religious profession always, her death was in keeping with her life. She set her house in order—what was left of it for her thus to set—resigned herself into God's hands, imploring his pardon through his Son, and looking to Him for glory, honour, and immortality. She blessed her friends—the oldest and kindest of them, her sister—and died peacefully.

Elizabeth Hamilton, with her fortitude and stanchness, strenuously defended castle-building from the strictures with which it has been visited by many Christian moralists. She alleged that imagination was not sufficiently cultivated as a moral power and safeguard (she might have added, as a great element of faith); and that by allowing oneself to picture what one would be—above all, in character and act—there might be an excellent balance maintained against inordinate self-esteem. But per-

haps few girls indulge the speculation which caused Elizabeth to write in her youth at Ingram's Crook :—

"And straight I in the glass surveyed
An antique maiden much decayed,
Whose languid eye and pallid cheek
The conquering power of time bespeak.
But though deprived of youthful bloom,
Free was my brow from peevish gloom.
A cap, though not of modern grace,
Hid my grey hairs, and deck'd my face.
No more I fashion's livery wear,
But cleanly neatness all my care.
Whoe'er had seen me must have said,
There goes one cheerful, pleased old maid."

Perhaps as few old women have lightened heavy hours inflicted on them by chronic gout in employing their crippled hands to write such cheery welcomes to old age as this :—

"Is that Auld Age that's tirling at the pin ?
I trow it is—then haste to let him in.
Ye're kindly welcome, frien' ; sae dinna fear
To show yoursel', ye'll cause nae trouble here.
* * * * *
But far frae shirking ye as a disgrace,
Thankfu' I am to have lived to see your face ;
Nor sall I e'er disown ye, nor tak pride
To think how long I micht your visit hide ;

Doing my best to mak ye weel respecktet,
I'll no fear for your sake to be neglectet.
But now ye're come, and through a' kind o' weather,
We're doomed frae this time forth to jog thegither;
I'd fain mak compact wi' ye firm and strong,
On terms o' fair giff-gaff to haud out long;
Gin thou'lt be civil, I sall liberal be:
Witness the lang, lang list of what I'll gie.
First, then, I here mak ower for gude and aye
A' youthfu' fancies, whether bright or gay;
Beauties and graces too I wad resign them,
But sair I fear 't wad cost ye fash to fin' them,
For 'gainst your daddy Time they couldna stand,
Nor bear the grip o' his unsonsy hand.
But there's my skin, whilk ye may further crunkle,
And write your name at length in ilka wrunkle;
On my brown locks ye've leave to lay your paw,
And bleach them to your fancy, white as snaw;
But lookna, Age, sae wistfu' at my mouth,
As gin ye langed to pu' out ilka tooth;
Let them, I do beseech, still keep their places,
Though gin ye wish't, ye're free to paint their faces.

* * * * *

I ken by that fell glower and meaning shrug
Ye'd slap your skinny fingers on each lug;
And now fain ye are, I trow, and keen,
To cast your misty powders in my e'en;
But O, in mercy spare my poor wee twinkers,
And I for aye sall wear your crystal blinkers.
Then 'bout my lugs I'd fain a bargain mak,
And gie my hand that I sall ne'er draw back.
Weel, then—wad ye consent their use to share,
'T wad serve us baith, and be a bargain rare.

Thus I wad hae't when babbling fools intrude
Gabbling their noisy nonsense lang and loud,
Or when ill-nature, weel brushed up by wit
Or sneer sarcastic, taks its aim to hit;
Or when detraction, meanest slave o' pride,
Spies out wee fauts and seeks great worth to hide,
Then mak me deaf—as deaf as deaf can be,
At sic a time my lugs I lend to thee.
But when in social hour ye see combined
Genius and wisdom—fruits o' heart and mind,
Good sense, good humour, wit in playfu' mood,
And candour e'en frae ill extracting good,
Oh! then, auld frien', I maun hae back my hearing,
To want it then would be an ill past bearing.

* * * *

Nae matter—hale and soun' I'll keep my heart,
Nor frae a crumb o' 't sall I ever part,
Its kindly warmth will ne'er be chilled by a'
The cauldest breath your frozen lips can blaw:
Ye needna fash your thumb, auld carle, nor fret,
For there affection sall preserve its seat,
And though to tak my hearing ye rejoice,
Yet spite o' you I'll still hear friendship's voice;
Thus though ye tak the rest, it sha'na grieve me,
For ae blythe spunk o' spirits ye maun leave me.
And let me tell ye in your lug, Auld Age,
I'm bound to travel wi' ye but ae stage;
Be't long or short, ye canna keep me back,
An' when we reach the end o' 't, ye maun pack,
For there we part for ever, late or ear'
Another gude companion meets me there,
To whom ye—will he, nill he—maun me bring;
Nor think that I'll be wae, and laith to spring

Frae your poor dozened side, ye carle uncouth,
To the blest arms of everlasting youth.
By time whate'er ye've rifled, stow'n, or ta'en,
Will a' be gi'en wi' interest back again.
* * * * *
Now a's tauld
Let us set out upon our journey cauld
Wi' nae vain boasts, nor vain regrets tormented,
We'll e'en jog on the gate, quiet and contented."

So Elizabeth Hamilton raises her cracked voice to greet old age, as she reads aloud these lines to her little family circle in George Street.

Her last work, written a year before her death, was "Hints to the Patrons and Directors of Public Schools." Taking up the system of Pestalozzi, she urged, as she had done in her "Letters on Education," the cultivation of metaphysics as the foundation of education. "Sound good sense," modesty, and kindness "eminently characterised" her prose writings. In some respects she forms, in them, a link between Hannah More and Miss Edgeworth.

It was on Elizabeth Hamilton's return home, after an absence of six months, during which she had, at the pressing request of a nobleman,

presided for a season over his motherless family, that in the exhilaration of her restoration to her "ain folk," she wrote "My ain fireside."

This song, which is the "Home, sweet Home" of Scotland, has peculiar and individual merits. "Home, sweet Home" is more local, and yet it is more vague in its very sentimentality. "My ain fireside" is the fervent utterance of Scotch independence, and of affection concentrated into a few rugged channels. Elizabeth Hamilton, as shown in her song, had the aristocratic bias and the enthusiastic loyalty of her countrymen, but her purely human instinct was very much stronger. She was faithful to that "blude" which "is thicker than water," and to the perfect regard which friendship ought to mean. Though she was what the world of her day would have called "a polite woman," she had a true and warm-hearted woman's detestation of form, for form's sake, and for every shade of guile and hypocrisy. She had a gracious woman's bountiful gladness when gladness is meet; and she had withal something of the poet's suggestive appropriateness of epithet

and figure, as seen in her line of the "bonnie blythe blink o' my ain fireside." As with poets generally, her enjoyment was keen in proportion to the sharpness of her pain: she had known the happiness which is so great that it brings tears into the eyes, and points back inevitably to the days and the sorrows which are gone—but not forgotten, their mark and their fruit being left behind them. It only remains to be said that "My ain fireside" has shared the plague of popularity, having grown or fallen into many different versions since its author wrote it.

MY AIN FIRESIDE.

Oh! I hae seen great anes, and sat in great ha's,
'Mong lords and 'mong ladies a' covered wi' braws;
At feasts made for princes, wi' princes I've been,
Where the grand shine o' splendour has dazzled my e'en;
But a sight sae delightfu', I trow, I ne'er spied,
As the bonnie blythe blink o' my ain fireside.
My ain fireside, my ain fireside,
O cheery's the blink o' my ain fireside.
My ain fireside, my ain fireside,
O there's nought to compare wi' my ain fireside.

Ance mair, Gude be praised, round my ain heartsome ingle,
Wi' the friends o' my youth I cordially mingle;
Nae forms to compel me to seem wae or glad,
I may laugh when I'm merry, and sigh when I'm sad;
Nae falsehood to dread, and nae malice to fear,
But truth to delight me, and friendship to cheer;
Of a' roads to happiness ever were tried,
There's nane half so sure as ane's ain fireside.
My ain fireside, my ain fireside,
O there's nought to compare wi' my ain fireside.

When I draw in my stool on my cosy hearthstane,
My heart loups sae light I scarce ken't for my ain;
Care's down on the wind, it is clean out o' sight,
Past troubles they seem but as dreams o' the night.
There but kind voices, kind faces I see,
And mark saft affection glent fond frae ilk e'e;
Nae fleechings o' flattery, nae boastings o' pride,
'Tis heart speaks to heart, at ane's ain fireside.
My ain fireside, my ain fireside,
O there's nought to compare wi' ane's ain fireside.

END OF VOL. I.

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